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HISTORY  
OF  
CONGREGATIONALISM

FROM ABOUT A. D. 250 TO 1616.

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BY GEORGE PUNCHARD,  
AUTHOR OF "A VIEW OF CONGREGATIONALISM."  
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## PREFACE.

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THIS volume contains the history of Congregationalism from about A. D. 250 to 1616. Much of it, consequently, is occupied with the history of the *principles and doctrines* now embraced by the denomination, rather than by the history of *Congregationalists* themselves. Though as a denomination, we had no distinctive, organized existence until near the close of the sixteenth century ; yet, inasmuch as some of our denominational peculiarities have always found advocates and friends, since the days of the apostles, —a very imperfect notion could be formed of our history, if these facts were entirely overlooked. But, in order to bring them out, it has been necessary to travel over a very extensive field of observation, and to introduce more of general history than, at first thought, may seem strictly proper in a denominational work.

The sources whence this history has been drawn, will sufficiently appear by reference to the margin. Original authorities have been appealed to whenever they have been within my reach ; and when they have not, the defect has been, in part at least, supplied, by comparing several second-hand authorities, and when it was possible, men of different views and habits of thought.

I have not been anxious to avoid the charge of making my pages “bristle with notes and references.” It would have saved a great deal of labor to have omitted them altogether ; but I could not persuade myself that an historical work would be of any value which did not furnish vouchers for its statements. The pretty copious extracts from the early Congregational writers, will, I am confident, be regarded as among the most valuable portions of this volume. To the community generally, these writings are unknown, and utterly inaccessible ; and yet, they are among the richest and most important materials of our history :

and I flatter myself that I have performed an acceptable service to the denomination by bringing to light the sentiments of our ancestors in their own quaint but vigorous style.

So far as I know, this is the first attempt ever made to write a history of Congregationalism. It may seem a strange and unaccountable fact, that so large, and important, and learned a denomination has never before found a historiographer. And some may think that the present undertaking requires explanation and apology. I have thought so myself; and designed to say a few words to palliate, if not to excuse my boldness. But, on reflection, it has occurred, that, if the undertaking should prove measurably successful, no apology will be necessary; and if a failure, none will avail if offered. Conscious of having done what I could to render the work acceptable and valuable to the intelligent part of the denomination, I shall cheerfully submit to their judgment, be it what it may. And if, in traveling so long, and difficult a path, and one hitherto untrodden, I have sometimes stumbled by the way, it will not be a matter of much surprise; and I shall feel that they deserve my thanks, rather than my complaints, who shall discover and point out my mistakes; remembering that a wise man has said, "He that commits anything to writing, gives men a bill of his manners; which every one that reads may put in suit against him, if there be cause."

Should the success of this volume warrant it, another—which is already in a state of forwardness—will be published, containing the history of the denomination at home and abroad from about 1616, to the present time.

GEORGE PUNCHARD.

*Plymouth, N. H. June, 1841.*

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"*A True Description, out of the Word of God, of the Visible Church.*" 1589. Written, probably, by Clytton or Smyth, the predecessors of John Robinson in the church which finally emigrated to New England, p. 364.

#### No. II.

*Rev. John Robinson's Answer to Joseph Hall, showing the grounds on which the separation was made from the Church of England,* p. 373.

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#### ERRATA.

Those who know the extreme difficulty—not to say impossibility—of printing with entire accuracy, will excuse a few typographical errors; especially, when told, that the author and his printer have not been upon speaking terms during the progress of the work, being about a hundred miles apart.

Page 67, line 19, for *Imperitore* read *Imperitori*.  
 " 167, " 16, " *were* " *even for*.  
 " 202, " 11, " *would* " *could*.  
 " 258, " 11, " 1693 " 1593.  
 " 300, " 31, " *same* " *semi*.  
 " 302, " 13, " *Arkheim* " *Arnheim*.  
 " 354, " 3, " *Munter* " *Murton*.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IN the following pages it is proposed to trace the history of Congregationalism from about A. D. 250 to the present time. This volume may, therefore, be considered as a continuation of "*A View of Congregationalism*," a work submitted to the public a few months since ; in which the principles, doctrines, practice, and early history, together with some of the supposed advantages of Congregationalism were briefly detailed. Those who have read that work, need not be told what are the peculiarities of this system of church government: but, as this volume may fall into the hands of some persons who are not acquainted with our denominational peculiarities, it may be desirable to enumerate the leading principles and doctrines of Congregationalism.

THE PRINCIPLES may be thus stated :—The Scriptures are an infallible guide to the essentials of church order and discipline.—A Christian church is a voluntary association of persons professing repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ, united together by a solemn covenant for the worship of God and the celebration of religious ordinances.—This company should ordinarily consist of no more than can conveniently and statedly meet together for religious pur-

poses.—To this assembly of professing Christians, united by a covenant, and statedly meeting for church purposes, all executive ecclesiastical or church power is intrusted by Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church.

THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINES of this system are these :—The Scriptures recognize but two orders of permanent church officers, viz. *Elders* (sometimes called pastors, overseers, or bishops) and *Deacons*.—There should be an entire ecclesiastical equality among all Christian elders, pastors, overseers or bishops.—Councils, consisting of pastors and lay delegates from the churches, have no juridical authority ; being simply advisory or suasive bodies.—Congregational churches, though independent of each other so far as “their own procedure in worship, as well as discipline” is concerned, yet should hold themselves ready to give account to sister churches of their faith and religious practices.

Such are the prominent outlines of the denomination whose history we are now to consider. Such, we suppose, was the polity of the churches founded by Christ and his apostles, and for more than two hundred years substantially retained by all Christendom. The proof of this, furnished by the Scriptures, the Apostolic Fathers, and the testimony of learned men of different denominations, will be found in the work already alluded to—“*A View of Congregationalism*”—and need not be here recapitulated.

This simple and perfect system of church order, drawn in outline by Christ, and filled up in detail by his inspired apostles, was gradually defaced and deformed by the pride and ambition of the clergy, aided by the inattention of the churches to their Christian rights and privileges ; and, in lieu of it, the complicated and corrupt system of Antichrist was introduced, with its pope and cardinals, its archbishops



and bishops, its arch-presbyters and presbyters, its arch-deacons and deacons—to say nothing of the sub-deacons, and acolythi, and ostiarii, and lectors, and exorcists, and copiatæ—all whom were more or less essential to the perfection of that system of church order, and government, and worship, which was foisted upon the world as alone true and infallible.\*

Between the order of Christ's house, and that of Antichrist's, there is an immense difference ;—indeed, there is no resemblance whatever. And the inquiry may very naturally arise, How could a change, so entire, be wrought in the polity of the churches ? Some have urged this question as a capital objection to the belief, that Congregationalism was, for substance, the system of apostolical church government.† If it was, say they, how could such a change be brought about ? And why were not these encroachments protested against and resisted ?

I expect to show in the body of this work, that these encroachments were protested against and resisted, even unto

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\* Some idea of the early corruption of the churches, and of the cumbersome and unscriptural machinery which was introduced into them, may be formed from the account which is given us of the church at Rome, about the middle of the third century. Cornelius, bishop of Rome, writing to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, gives the following list of his clergy, etc. "*There are six and forty priests, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, two and forty acholites* [a sort of waiter to the bishop], *two and fifty exorcists* [persons employed to expel evil spirits], *and readers* [i. e. of the Scriptures, in public worship] *with porters.*" All these were subject to one bishop, and were regarded as necessary to a single church of the highest rank and dignity.—See Eusebius' Ecc. Hist. Lib. VI. Chap. 42, or Milner, Cent. III. Chap. 9.

† The celebrated Episcopal writer, Stillingfleet, takes this ground in his "Unreasonableness of Separation."—See Owen's answer to him.

blood. In this Introduction, I propose to speak, very briefly, of the manner in which this change in the polity of the churches was introduced. I am disposed to undertake this, from the conviction that this survey will forcibly illustrate the importance of holding fast the great principles of apostolic church order, while it will prepare the reader for the historical details which may follow in the sequel.

It has already been intimated, that *the pride and ambition of the clergy and the carelessness of the people* were the main springs in the machinery which overturned the apostolic order and discipline of the Christian churches.

This machinery began its operations at a very early period ; yea, even before the apostles were in their graves. Paul doubtless anticipated the changes, which have since taken place in the order of the churches, when he said to the elders of the church of Ephesus : “ I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”—Acts 20: 29. John experienced the opposition of one of these “ wolves,” in the person of *Diotrephes* ; who so loved “ to have the preeminence” over the church of which he was pastor, that he rejected even the apostolic authority of John himself. “ I wrote unto the church,” or, I would have written—says John to the beloved Gaius—“ but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”\* Clement, “ the almost apostle,” confirms the belief, that the apostles anticipated the workings of ambition among the clergy, when he says : “ Our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ, that there should contentions arise upon the account of the ministry,” or, “ about the name of the bishoprick,”† or, episcopacy itself. These contentions about the episcopal office—or, perhaps, about that presidency among the elders and

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\* III Ep. John, 9th v. See also McKnight, in loc.

† Clement’s Epistle to the Corinthians, § 44.

over the churches which was early introduced\*—was doubtless aggravated, if not originated, by the manifest disposition of the members of the churches to attach themselves to their favorite preachers. Even in the days of the apostles, this leaven of unrighteousness began to work. At Corinth, for example, the church were strongly inclined to break into parties, to arrange themselves under distinct leaders. One said, “I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos;” hence arose “envying, and strife, and divisions.”—See 1 Cor. 1: 3—7.

Now, if this partizan spirit existed at so early a period, in the churches, and if there was a disposition to make even the apostles themselves the heads of factions, we need not be surprised at the apprehensions of those holy men for the future peace and prosperity of the churches; or that afterwards this partizan spirit should be taken advantage of by ambitious men, to promote their own selfish ends, regardless of the interests or rights of the churches.

To counteract these workings of the “mystery of iniquity,” the apostles did what in them lay; by setting in order the churches, and by ordaining elders in every church; by giving directions—as Clement tells us they did—“how, when they [the teachers set over them by the apostles] should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in the ministry;” and also by warnings, and admonitions, and exhortations, and counsels, and advice, to induce the churches to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free.

Notwithstanding all this, the churches began to vary somewhat from the apostolic order, before the close of the second century—yea, within the lifetime of some who had been contemporary with the apostles themselves. In the

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\* See Mosheim, Cent. I, P. II, Chap. 2. § 11.

third century very extensive corruptions spread among them. These prepared the way for the establishment of Constantine's hierarchy, in the fourth century ; which made way for the abounding errors and corruptions of the three succeeding centuries, and the enthronement of the "MAN OF SIN" in the eighth century.

*The very excellencies for which the primitive elders were distinguished, were an occasion of corruption to the churches.*

This may seem a paradoxical assertion. It will, nevertheless, be found susceptible of demonstration, that the virtues of the Christian pastors of the first and second centuries were the innocent occasion of corruption to the churches.

To be a Christian pastor in those "perilous times" was to take the front rank in danger ; for the officers of the churches were the first to be sought after when persecution arose "because of the word." To men who were ready to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ, the churches reasonably supposed that they might safely trust their dearest rights. They would naturally choose to be guided by the opinions, and governed by the wishes of such men. They would be slow to think or speak of their own ecclesiastical rights.\* Feeling that all was safe in the hands of

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\* Ecclesiastical history furnishes abundant evidence of the existence of this veneration. For example, the church of Smyrna, in their relation of the martyrdom of their venerable pastor, Polycarp, tell us : "When the fuel was ready, Polycarp laying aside all his upper garments, and undoing his girdle, tried also to pull off his clothes underneath, *which afortime he was not wont to do ; forasmuch, as always, every one of the Christians that was about him contended who should soonest touch his flesh.*"—Apostolical Fathers, p. 245. That this veneration for religious teachers was not unknown in the churches at a later period, is obvious from the account given us of the celebrated Martin, bishop of Tours, in the

their devoted and venerated pastors, they would readily dismiss all anxious care; and it would be but reasonable to suppose, that ere long it would be forgotten that the churches had any claim to those special rights and immunities which they had so long neglected to exercise.

The difficulty and danger in meeting together for the transaction of church business, during the seasons of persecution to which the churches were frequently exposed for more than two hundred years after Christ, would be an additional reason for leaving the management of their affairs more entirely in the hands of their officers than was originally contemplated.

The extra-scriptural authority thus given to their religious teachers, as an evidence of affectionate confidence, and to some extent made necessary by the peculiar cir-

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fourth century. "This personage was in the habit of frequenting the palace, [of the emperor Maximus], where he was always entertained by the empress, who not only hung upon his lips for instruction, but, in imitation of the penitent in the Gospels, actually bathed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair; and he who had never before sustained the touch of a woman, could not avoid her assiduities. She, unmindful of the state and dignity and splendors of her royal rank, lay prostrate at the feet of Martin, whence she could not be removed until she had obtained permission, first from her husband, and then by his aid from the bishop, to wait upon him at table as his servant, without the assistance of any menial. The blessed man could no longer resist her importunities; and the empress herself made the requisite preparations of couch, and table, and cookery (in temperate style), and water for the hands; and as he sat, stood aloof, and motionless, in the manner proper to a slave; with due modesty and humility, mixing and presenting the wine. And when the meal was ended, reverently collected the crumbs, which she deemed of higher worth than the delicacies of a royal banquet."—Sulpitius' *Life of St. Martin*, quoted in "*Natural History of Enthusiasm*," pp. 189, 190. See also Milner's *Hist. of the Church*, Cent. IV. Chap. 14.

cumstances of the churches, was at first, without doubt, faithfully exercised ; but, in process of time—and not a very long time either—that authority which had been yielded by the churches as *a boon*, would be claimed by the clergy as *a right* ; and most eagerly, by those most likely to abuse it.

*The superiority which the city churches assumed over those in the country*, was another step in the progress of deterioration.

The first churches were, for the most part, planted in cities and populous towns. These had elders or bishops placed over them by the direction of the apostles. To their ministrations the scattered Christians in the country around resorted. But, as these latter became more numerous, they desired the occasional or the stated ministrations of the gospel among themselves. Instead then, of being formed into separate churches, as they should have been, the city church supplied them with one of her elders. Consequently, both he and his rural flock regarded themselves as belonging to the mother church ; and naturally paid that deference to her and her teachers which their dependent relation suggested. And when the city churches came to have *presidents*,—who were stated moderators among the elders and general supervisors of the affairs of the churches,—these, of course, exercised a supervision and control over the rural congregations and their elders, as parts of the city church. In this way, Diocesan episcopacy was gradually and imperceptibly introduced. This would have been the natural result of causes like those just alluded to, in any country ; but more especially in a country governed like that in which Christianity was first planted. In the Roman Empire, the capital cities were looked to as the sources of political power ; being the places where the governing officers of the province resided,

and whence issued the decrees which controlled the province.

Another step in the path of declension, was *the introduction of synods, or general councils, with authority to make laws for the government of the churches.*

The first appearance of these assemblies was about A. D. 170 or 173. At first they were composed of the *representatives* of the independent churches, elected for the express purpose of deliberating in behalf and in the room of these churches. It was not long, however, before they assumed the right to act in their own name. These bodies, of course, needed a moderator; and as they generally assembled in the capital of the province,\* who so suitable for a moderator as the president of the city church; an officer who began now to be called *bishop*, to distinguish him from his co-equals, the elders. This honor, at first conferred as an act of courtesy, would be expected as a matter of propriety, and finally claimed as an official right. In this way the office of Metropolitan or Diocesan bishop was, probably, introduced into the churches.†

Another way in which these synods corrupted the original order of the churches, was, by taking to themselves a legislative and juridical authority.

It was natural that the churches should pay great deference to the opinions and decisions of these bodies, composed as they usually were, of the bishops of an entire province; and, it was not at all strange that their decisions

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\* Gibbon tells us: "It was soon established as a custom and as a law that the bishops of the independent churches should meet in the capital of the province at the stated periods of spring and autumn."—*Decline and Fall*, Vol. I. Chap. 15.

† See Mosheim, Cent. II. Part II. Chap. 2. Waddington, pp. 43—45, Harper's Edition. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Vol. I. Chap. 15. p. 274, Harper's Ed.

should gradually assume the form of *canons*, or rules, for the government of the represented churches ; for rulers—ecclesiastical as well as civil—will generally assume authority as fast as the people will yield it.

The doctrine that *the ministers of the Christian church were the successors of the Jewish priesthood*, which, if not *originated* in the second century, was then most successfully inculcated by the clergy, contributed materially to the great work of corrupting the churches.

If the clergy were the successors of the Jewish priests, why then, of course, a resemblance between the two was to be looked for. The bishops, or presiding elders, were made to answer to the high priest, the presbyters or elders to the priests, and the deacons to the levites. “This idea,” says Mosheim, “being once introduced and approved, drew after it other errors.” Among which was, that it gave an *official* elevation and sacredness to the clergy which Christ never authorized.

Another effect of this new doctrine was, to open the way for the exaction of the first fruits and tithes, for the support of the clergy. For surely, if they were successors to the Levitical priesthood, it was but reasonable that they should claim the tithes and first fruits, as means of support. Neither did they stop here ; but “argued, that because the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, were the high-priests, priests, and levites of a superior, a more heavenly and spiritual dispensation, they ought to possess more of the unrighteous mammon ; that is, more earthly treasures, and greater temporal power” than did the ministers of the ancient church. “And, what is still more extraordinary, by such wretched reasoning the bulk of mankind were convinced.”\*

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\* See Campbell's Lec. on Ecc. Hist. L. X. first part. Also,



By these several steps,\* the power of the clergy was greatly enhanced at the expense of the rights and privileges of the churches; and yet, so gradually, that those who were most affected by it, were least sensible of the process.

There is much truth, doubtless, in what Dr. Owen says on this point: "This declension of the churches from their primitive order and institution, is discoverable, rather by measuring the distance between what it left, and what it arrived unto, than by express instances of it. But yet, is it not altogether like unto that of a ship at sea, but rather like unto the way of a serpent on a rock, which leaves some slime in all its turnings and windings, whereby it may be traced."—Inquiry, etc. Pref. p. 20, 21.

Mr. Waddington very justly remarks: "It is true that the first operations of corruption are slow, and generally imperceptible, so that it is not easy to ascertain the precise moment of its commencement. But a candid inquirer cannot avoid perceiving that, about the end of the second, and the beginning of the third century, some changes had taken place in the ecclesiastical system which indicated a departure from its primitive purity. \* \* In closely attending to its history, we observe that it becomes thenceforward the history of men rather than of things; the body of the church is not so much in view, but the acts of its ministers and teachers are continually before us."—Hist. of Chh. pp. 49, 50.

We have now arrived at what Waddington terms—"The

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Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. I. Chap. 15. p. 276.

\* I would not be understood to assert, that I have accurately pointed out all the steps of the downward course of the churches from their original order and institution—but only some of the more prominent and probable.

*first crisis* in the internal history of the Church." It was in the third century that the bishops assumed "the ensigns of temporal dignity, the splendid throne, the sumptuous garments, the parade of external pomp," and the tokens of "a contentious ambition." It was in this century that the addition of the "minor orders" of the ministry—such as sub-deacons, acolythi, readers, exorcists, etc.—gave proof of the growing pride and ambition, as well as indolence of the clergy.\*

All these things indicate the corruption, as well as the extension, of Christianity. Its influence was indeed perceptibly growing in the empire, though exposed to occasional checks from popular tumults and legalized persecution. Beyond these limits, it was also making progress. And this brings us to notice another and most powerful cause of the corruption of the churches.

I refer to *the admission to the churches of multitudes who were destitute of piety.*

\* Mosheim, Cent. III. P. II. Chap. 2. Waddington, Chap. 3. Even Milner—who certainly cannot be accused of uncharitableness towards the orthodox and established church—gives a sombre picture of the state of religion near the close of the third century. "If," says he, "Christ's kingdom had been of this world; and, if its strength and beauty were to be measured by secular prosperity, we should here fix the era of its greatness. But, on the contrary, the era of its actual declension must be dated in the pacific part of Diocletian's reign.

"During this whole century the work of God, in purity and power, had been tending to decay; the connection with philosophers was one of the principal causes; outward peace and secular advantages completed the corruption; ecclesiastical discipline, which had been too strict, [?] was now relaxed exceedingly; bishops and people were in a state of malice; endless quarrels were fomented among contending parties; and ambition and covetousness, had, in general, gained the ascendancy in the Christian church."—Hist. of Chh. Cent. III. Chap. 17.

When the *ministers* of the churches had become their *governors*, and the ambitious desire of enlarging their dominions and multiplying their subjects had induced these governors to dispense with the apostolic prerequisites for church membership, and to admit whole towns and cities, yea, and entire nations within the pale of the Christian church, upon a profession of their wish to become Christians and to receive baptism;\*—when, I say, these things became matters of history, as they did in the third and fourth centuries, it is obvious that the churches could no longer be little sacred republics. It was no longer possible to manage ecclesiastical matters after the manner of the first century. The world had now overspread the church; and the church, if governed at all, must be governed by worldly policy. And so it was, from about the close of the third century to the sixteenth.

The conversion of Constantine—whether real or nominal, I leave others to decide†—was followed, as a matter of course, by a similar conversion of the court and the empire itself. But the cause of corruption, of which I am now speaking, developed itself most fully in connection with the nominal christianization of the barbarians who conquered and overran the Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries. For, contrary to the usual course of events, these conquerors embraced the religion of the conquered; and entered the church by thousands—yea, I might say, *by nations*! The same is substantially true of the admission

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\* See Dr. Owen—"The True Nature of a Gospel Church," etc. Chap. 1. Complete Works, Vol. XX. p. 363.

† The reader will find in Gibbon (Vol. 1. Chaps. 18 and 20) all that can be said, or, with any color of truth insinuated, against Constantine, with much that is favorable to him. Waddington takes a very just and candid view of the Emperor, Part II. Chap. 6.

of those who had received the Christian religion from the hands of missionaries, previous to the overthrow of the Empire. These semi-christianized hordes, coming into the church with little knowledge of the principles of the Christian religion, and as little acquaintance with its spirit, would add to the numbers and outward glory of the churches, but not to their real strength.

Most pertinent and instructive are the words of Dr. Owen upon this subject : " Herein, I say, did the guides of the church certainly miss their rule, and depart from it, in the days of Constantine the emperor, and afterward under other Christian emperors, when whole towns, cities, yea, and nations offered at once to join themselves unto it. Evident it is, that they were not wrought hereunto by the same power, nor induced unto it by the same motives, or led by the same means with those who formerly under persecutions were converted unto the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this quickly manifested itself in the lives and conversations of many, yea, of the most of them. Hence those which were wise, quickly understood, that what the church had got in multitude and number, it had lost in the beauty and glory of its holy profession. Chrysostom in particular complains of it frequently, and in many places cries out, What have I to do with this multitude, a few serious believers are worth more than them all. However, the guides of the church thought meet to receive them with all their multitudes, into their communion, at least so far as to place them under the jurisdiction of such and such episcopal sees ; for hereby their own power, authority, dignity, revenues, were enlarged and mightily increased. On this occasion, the ancient primitive way of admitting members into the church being relinquished, the consideration of their personal qualifications, and real conversion to God, omitted,

such multitudes being received as could not partake in all acts and duties of communion with those particular churches whereunto they were disposed, and being the most of them unfit to be ruled by the power and influence of the commands of Christ on their minds and consciences, it was impossible but that a great alteration must ensue in the state, order and rule of the churches, and a great deviation from their original institution.”\*

Men, converted to Christianity because it was the religion of the court ; or because, pressed by their enemies, they hoped to find in Christ a more powerful god than those in whom they had before trusted ; or, because their pagan monarch, driven to desperation in the day of battle, had vowed to be a Christian if he might but conquer ; or for some other reason, equally remote from what the gospel requires—such men, it is evident, could know little of the rights of churches, and they would care as little.† They,

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\* “Inquiry into the Original, etc. of Evangelical Churches,” Preface—Complete Works, Vol. XX. p. 21.

† “The conversion of the Burgundians, early in the fifth century, is thus related, with no improbability. Harassed by the continual incursions of the Huns, and incapable of self-defence, they resolved to place themselves under the protection of some God ; and considering that the God of the Romans most powerfully befriended those who served him, they determined, on public deliberation, to believe in Jesus Christ. They therefore went to a city in Gaul, and entreated the bishop to baptize them. Immediately after that ceremony they gained a battle against their enemies ; and if (as is also asserted) they afterwards lived in peace and innocence, they reaped, in that respect, at least, the natural fruits of their conversion.”—Waddington, Chap. 9. p. 117, note.

“In the year 493 Clovis espoused Clotilda, niece of the king of the Burgundians, a Christian and a catholic. He tolerated the religion of his bride, and showed respect to its professors, especially to St. Remi, archbishop of Rheims ; but he steadily refused to

however, within a few centuries, constituted a majority of those who bore the Christian name.

More than this : such masses of ignorance could not be governed by the rules of Christ's church. They had been accustomed to the arbitrary control of their pagan priests, and they desired no further liberty under their new masters ; and if they had desired it, they were manifestly unqualified to use it.

Thus it was, that one error led into another. Thus were the lineaments of the churches of Christ effaced. I speak not of their religious faith. There was, doubtless, much of doctrinal truth retained, and some sincere piety amidst all

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abandon his hereditary idols on the importunity either of the prelate or queen. At length he found himself in a situation of danger ; in the heat of an unsuccessful battle, while his Franks were flying before the Alemanni, Clovis is related to have raised his weeping eyes to heaven, and exclaimed, ' Jesus Christ ! thou whom Clotilda asserts to be the son of the living God, I implore thy succor. If thou wilt give me the victory, I will believe in thee, and be baptized in thy name.' At that moment the king of the Alemanni was slain ; his soldiers immediately fled, and abandoned the field to Clovis. The victor was not unmindful of the God of his adversity. On the conclusion of his expedition he caused himself to be publicly baptized ; about three thousand of his soldiers attended him to the holy font with joy and acclamation, and the rest of his subjects followed without any hesitation the faith of their prince. The conversion of Clovis took place in 496 ; and though it had not the effect of amending the brutal character of the proselyte, it made a great addition to the physical strength of Christianity.'—Waddington, Chap. 31. p. 116.

The temper of this convert, after his professed conversion, is well exhibited by the following anecdote, related in Mosheim (Vol. I. p. 315, note 10. Harper's Ed.) : "*Clovis* once hearing a pathetic discourse on the sufferings of *Christ*, exclaimed : *Si ego ibidem cum Francis meis fuissetem, injurias ejus vindicassetem. Had I been there with my Franks, I would have avenged his wrongs.*"

the increasing errors of the first seven centuries; yea, there were stars shining in the gathering darkness. I speak of the polity of the churches. This, as drawn by the hand of Christ and his apostles, was gradually defaced and deformed; and the causes which wrought this deformity were, in part at least, such as have been named.

*The wealth and temporal honors conferred upon the clergy*—the gifts of princes and the homage of converted nations — had an important agency in corrupting the churches.

When Christianity became the adopted child of the Roman emperor, it was natural that he should feel a pride in honoring and elevating her in the eyes of the world. And, as the clergy had now become THE CHURCH,\* the most obvious way to accomplish the desired end was to heap wealth and honors and privileges upon them. This accordingly was done. "The whole body of the Catholic clergy," says Gibbon, "more numerous perhaps than the legions, was exempted by the emperors from all service, private or public, all municipal offices, and all personal taxes and contributions, which pressed on their fellow citizens with intolerable weight.† The example and command of the Emperor Constantine rendered them the objects of private benevolence and public benefactions.‡

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\* "From the moment that the interests of the ministers became at all distinguished from the interests of the religion, the corruption of Christianity may be considered to have begun."—Waddington, p. 44, Note.

This period he dates towards the end of the second century.

† "Decline and Fall," Vol. I. Chap. 20. p. 429.

‡ Gibbon tells us, that the bishop of Carthage was at one time informed by a messenger from Constantine, "That the treasurers of the province are directed to pay into his hands the sum of *three*

The bishops alone, of all the myriads of Roman citizens, enjoyed the privilege of being tried by their peers ; and the minor orders were amenable for all ordinary *civil* offences to their respective bishops ; who, from the time of Constantine, were made judges of *civil* as well as ecclesiastical causes, in their respective dioceses. Hence arose the "*Bishop's Court*;" a tribunal which so many of the fathers of New England Congregationalism had cause to remember.

It is hardly necessary to remark, that the truth of these representations necessarily implies a very considerable change in the order and discipline of the churches—rather, of THE CHURCH, as the "established" religion of the empire was now called.

This wealth, and these honors, immunities, and privileges bestowed upon the clergy, were fuel to their ambition and pride. Instead of satisfying their rapacity, they acted as incitements to intrigue and unhallowed efforts to increase their wealth and importance.

We have yet, however, deeper shades to throw over this dark picture. In addition to all that the Roman emperors

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*thousand folles, or eighteen thousand pounds sterling, and to obey his further requisitions for the relief of the churches of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania."* In another sentence the historian informs us, that "An annual income of six hundred pounds sterling may be reasonably assigned to the bishops, who were placed at equal distance between riches and poverty, but the standard of their wealth insensibly rose with the dignity and opulence of the cities which they governed."—Chap. 20. p. 430.

Mosheim says, that "the vices and faults of the clergy, especially of those who officiated in large and opulent cities, were augmented in proportion to the increase of their wealth, honors, and advantages, derived from the emperors and various other sources ; and that this increase was very great, after the time of Constantine, is acknowledged by all."—Cent. IV. P. II. Chap. 2. § 8.



had done to vitiate the order of the churches, by pampering the pride and feeding the ambition of the clergy, there were elements in the community itself, which gave peculiar encouragement to clerical usurpations.

The emperor's partiality for the church, was, with the mass of his subjects, the most powerful of all arguments to profess attachment to the new religion. If we may credit the testimony of Gibbon, "in one year twelve thousand men were baptized at Rome, besides a proportionable number of women and children."\* The example and smiles of the emperor were a sufficient inducement for all classes in society to think favorably of Christianity—or, at least, to *profess* this opinion—without supposing that bribes were actually offered to all who would become converts.†

Men who had been educated amidst the sensuous attractiveness of pagan worship, were not displeased to find something of the pageantry of Paganism in their Christian worship. The churches were encouraged to erect sumptuous buildings for their accommodation.

The costly edifice with its beams of cedar from Libanus, and its roof of glittering brass, enriched, perhaps, with gilding, and its walls, and columns, and pavement, of variegated marble, was an object well suited to attract the Pagan, and to quiet any lingerings of regret in the half-made convert to Christianity. And when to these superb fixtures were added the splendid ornaments of gold, and silver, and precious stones, with which the Christian altars were made to glisten,‡ the most fastidious, and sensual heathen could scarcely

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\* Vol. I. Chap. 20. p. 425.

† Gibbon insinuates, "that a white garment, with twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the emperor to every convert." In a note, he has the candor to admit that the "evidence is contemptible enough" on which he makes the insinuation.

‡ See Gibbon's description of these matters.—Vol. I. Chap. 20.

look with lingering, longing eyes upon the temples of the gods, or the gorgeousness of their worship.\*

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\* Gibbon gives a full and interesting account of these innovations, and, as I suppose, a very correct one. I shall be excused, I trust, for quoting somewhat fully from him.

“As the objects of religion were gradually reduced to the standard of the imagination, the rites and ceremonies were introduced that seemed most powerfully to affect the senses of the vulgar. If, in the beginning of the fifth century, Tertullian, or Lactantius, had been suddenly raised from the dead, to assist at the festival of some popular saint, or martyr, they would have gazed with astonishment and indignation, on the profane spectacle, which had succeeded to the pure and spiritual worship of a Christian congregation. As soon as the doors of the church were thrown open, they must have been offended at the smoke of incense, the perfume of flowers, and the glare of lamps and tapers, which diffused, at noon-day, gaudy, superfluous, and, in their opinion, a sacrilegious light. If they approached the balustrade of the altar, they made their way through the prostrate crowd, consisting, for the most part, of strangers and pilgrims, who resorted to the city on the vigil of the feast; and who already felt the strong intoxication of fanaticism, and perhaps, of wine. Their devout kisses were imprinted on the walls and pavement of the sacred edifice; and their fervent prayers were directed, whatever might be the language of their church, to the bones, the blood, or the ashes of the saints, which were usually concealed, by a linen or silken veil, from the eyes of the vulgar.” \* \* \* \* “The walls were hung round with symbols of the favors which they had received; eyes, and hands, and feet, of gold and silver; and edifying pictures, which could not long escape the abuse of indiscreet or idolatrous devotion, represented the image, the attributes, and the miracles of the tutelar saint. The same uniform original spirit of superstition might suggest, in the most distant ages and countries, the same method of deceiving the credulity, and of affecting the senses, of mankind; but it must ingenuously be confessed, that the ministers of the Catholic church imitated the profane model, which they were impatient to destroy. The most respectable bishops had persuaded themselves, that the ignorant rustics would more cheerfully re-

It was, unquestionably, to meet the tastes of Pagans,—on the plea of winning them over to Christianity,—that the rulers of the church introduced many of the ornaments, and elegances, and extravagances, with which, from the days of Constantine, the beautiful simplicity of apostolic worship was deformed ; not perceiving, that they were gradually Paganizing the Church, rather than Christianizing the Pagans.\*

To what has been said of the corrupting influences which wrought within the boundaries of civilized Rome, must be added other influences, which came from the Barbarian nations who either received the gospel from the hands of the missionary, or, after the overthrow of the empire, were converted to a profession of Christianity with the expectation of finding it a more profitable system of religion than that in which they had been educated.

Some of these barbarous nations who had been accustomed to venerate, and all but deify their priests, and to allow them great secular influence, very naturally transferred much of this veneration to their Christian teachers ; and it would be strange if this were not heightened by their conviction of the superior power and glory of the new God to whom they had now devoted themselves, and whose ser-

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nounce the superstitions of paganism, if they found some resemblance, some compensation, in the bosom of Christianity. The religion of Constantine achieved, in less than a century, the final conquest of the Roman empire ; but the victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals.”—Gibbon, Vol. II. Chap. 28. p. 198. Harper’s Ed.

\* Does not the history of this experiment furnish overwhelming evidence of the soundness of the first principles of Congregationalism ; and the danger of all attempts to accommodate the order, discipline, and worship of the church, to any particular form of civil government, or to the tastes and peculiarities of the community in which it exists ?

vants these ministers were. Credulous and superstitious, as barbarians usually are, accustomed to believe implicitly, and to obey unhesitatingly, their religious guides, in religious matters, they would expect, and all but *demand* the same sort of slavery under their new priests. In such circumstances it would not require a stronger plea to justify the introduction of arbitrary government into the churches, than had sanctioned idolatrous rites in their worship.

Again ; the rich among these heathen converts, accustomed to bestow their wealth upon their pagan priests and altars, very naturally inferred, that similar gifts would be equally acceptable to their new teachers, and no less suitable to their new altars. It is needless to add, that these gifts were not refused. Thus the clergy and their churches were greatly enriched.

These things were abundantly sufficient to corrupt both priests and people, and materially to affect the apostolic and simple order of the churches. But these causes were not alone.

In the eighth century there began to prevail throughout the western Roman empire, a belief—encouraged, doubtless, if not originally suggested by the clergy—that the gift of property to churches was a certain passport to the divine favor ; and that wealth thus bestowed, might be lawfully substituted for the severe penances which had previously been inflicted upon religious offenders. These doctrines, so acceptable to the natural heart, were eagerly caught at by the wealthy and the wicked ; and they readily poured out their treasures at the feet of the clergy, in order to purchase the favor of God, or to obtain exemption from severe bodily penance for overt acts of transgression. Others left their estates as legacies to the churches, to purchase peace of conscience upon the bed of death, and to secure an entrance to the rest of heaven.

By such means, the bishops and their churches became immensely rich ; and of necessity, corrupt.

“ The gifts, moreover,” says Mosheim, “ by which the princes especially and the noblemen, endeavored to satisfy the priests and to expiate their past sins, were not merely *private* possessions which common citizens might own, and with which the churches and monasteries had often before been endowed ; but they were also *public* property, or such as may properly belong only to princes and nations, *royal domains* (*regalia*) as they are called. For the emperors, kings and princes, transferred to bishops, to churches, and to monasteries, whole provinces, cities, and castles, with all the rights of sovereignty over them. Thus the persons, whose business it was to teach contempt for the world both by precept and example, unexpectedly became *dukes, counts, marquises, judges, legislators, sovereign lords* ; and they not only administered justice to citizens, but even marched out to war, at the head of their own armies. And this was the origin of those great calamities which afterwards afflicted Europe, the lamentable wars and contests about *investures* and the *regalia*.”\*

It cannot be supposed, that under such circumstances, the established and pampered church, and stall-fed clergy would exhibit much of the apostolic character of the first ages.

Having dwelt with some degree of particularity on the prominent causes of the early corruption of the churches, it may be proper to say distinctly, what I have already repeatedly intimated—that, though, in the order and government and worship of the churches, great and gross corruptions had been introduced during the first seven centuries of Christian history—yet it must not be presumed that in

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\* Vol. I. B. III. Cent. VIII. P. II. Chap. 2.

religious doctrine the church was utterly unsound and corrupt. The truth was far otherwise. The essential doctrines of the gospel were generally retained by the orthodox part of the church, during the whole period which has passed under review. There were errors and heresies enough abroad in the world, and among professed Christians,—as the reader of any ecclesiastical history, particularly Mosheim, will have occasion to know—yet, the essential truths of religion were so extensively received, that we have reason to believe there were multitudes of truly pious persons within the pale of the Church, during even the darkest period of the seven hundred years of which we have been speaking. We have been occupied in tracing the footsteps of error, and declension, and corruption, in the order of the churches, and not the more pleasant marks of sincere piety in their members.\*

Further, it must be borne in mind, that we have had the rulers and the great men of the church chiefly before us. These, to be sure, were the men who gave direction to the outward form and character of the institution; but these were the men most likely to feel the influence of pride and ambition. To the humbler ministers—the presbyters and deacons of the church, and to individuals among the laity—we must look for the clearest evidences of Christ's spirit. But these, for the most part, are unknown in ecclesiastical history.

We have now very cursorily surveyed some of the more prominent steps of the "Mystery of Iniquity," so far as its

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\* He who would see the most favorable accounts of the orthodox churchmen of all ages, must consult "Milner's History of the Church;" a very evangelical work, but, in my humble judgment, much too highly rated, and often very deficient in candor, or judgment, when dissenters of any description are the subject matter of his history.

traces on the order and discipline of the churches of Christ are visible. These were the stepping-stones on which the "Man of Sin," after a fierce contest with his ambitious rivals, mounted to the throne of universal empire. And, supported by the despotic civil power—the "beast of seven heads and ten horns"\*—consummated the work of corruption in the general order of *Christ's house*.†

From the establishment of the temporal power of the Roman Pontiff—about A. D. 755—to the period of the Luthern Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Romish hierarchy grew more and more corrupt in its discipline and general character, until the world could no longer bear the grossness of its immoralities and the corruptions of its government. The eyes of men were at length opened ;

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\* See Revelation xvii, and 2 Thess. ii.

† The bishop of Rome, favored by his situation in the ancient capital of the empire, and the friendship of Pepin, the powerful French monarch, who made him exarch of Ravenna—a possession which was afterwards confirmed and enlarged by Charlemagne, in consideration of the bishop's services in procuring Charles the title of emperor of the West,—outwent all his competitors, "remained master of the field, and became SOVEREIGN PONTIFF ; " thereby obtaining," as Dr. Owen says, "a second conquest of the world." Owen's "Inquiry into the Original, etc. of Evangelical Churches," Preface, presents a learned and condensed view of the declension of the churches from the apostolic order. The entire work is one of great value to the student of this subject.

The exarchate of Ravenna, included the territories of Ravenna, Bologna and Ferrara, and embraced very nearly the same extent of country as is now called "The Roman States," or "The States of the Church." It covered something less than one third part of Italy.

It is worthy of remark, that the temporal power conferred on the Roman pontiff by Pepin and confirmed by Charlemagne, "has never since been either greatly increased or greatly diminished." —See Waddington's Hist. of the Church. Harper's Ed. p. 149.

and they beheld a woman sitting upon “a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications. And upon her forehead a name was written *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.*”—Rev. xvii.

Nations, which had been made drunk with “the wine of the wrath of her fornication,” awoke from the effects of her enchantments; and they wondered while they beheld the exact resemblance which the woman upon the scarlet colored beast bore to their own *mother church*; and their hearts were turned to hate her.

The translation of the Bible into the languages of Europe, and the circulation of it among the common people, were important means in promoting the Reformation. The Scriptures, while they exposed the doctrinal errors, and the gross immoralities of popery, revealed also the primitive model of a Christian church. The full discovery of this by the English Puritans was the result of their strict adherence to the grand principle of the Reformation: *That the Scriptures are a sufficient, and the only infallible guide to religious faith and practice.* A rejection of this principle, in its application to church order, has entailed national ecclesiastical establishments upon many Protestant countries; and has marred the beauty and excellence of various systems of church government, the framers of which have adopted the principle—that “Jesus Christ has not himself left any directions for governing the church.”\*

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\* I quote the language of Dr. Burton, Prof. of Divinity in Oxford, Eng. as given in the Oct. No. of Am. Bib. Rep. This senti-



Though the principle, that the Scriptures are a sufficient guide to the *order*, as well as the faith of the church, was early lost by the Christian world at large, and has not yet become generally recognized—still, there have never been wanting, even in the darkest ages, some witnesses to this truth. From very early antiquity we are able to trace the footsteps of sects or denominations of professed Christians who, by the adoption of this principle or for some other reason, have been led to embrace and maintain some of the distinctive principles or distinguishing doctrines of Congregationalism.

In the following pages I propose to enumerate these different sects, and to present a summary of their history. And it may be well at the outset, to apprize the reader, that he must be prepared to find these dissenters from “*The Church*” classed among heretics and schismatics ; and often loaded with reproaches. He need not be surprised if he sometimes finds them really defective in some important particulars, and not even deserving so good a name as could be wished. But, when it is remembered that, for most that we know of the dissenters of early ages, we are indebted to the writings of their enemies, we shall be prepared to receive ill reports with caution, while we estimate more highly the good that may be said of them.

But whether those of whom I shall write deserve an evil or good report, it is manifestly the duty of one who attempts to give the history of Congregationalism, to mention all those sects, who, previous to the full development of the Congregational system, embraced any of its distinguishing features ; however unlike, in other respects, they may have been to modern Congregationalists.

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ment is adopted and commended by the editors, who are Presbyterians.

I have surveyed the field of my labors sufficiently to be aware of the difficulties of my undertaking. I have not the vanity to expect to write a history which will be altogether acceptable to the friends of this denomination, or satisfactory to myself. But, in the absence of *any* history of Congregationalism, I hope that my humble labors may serve, at least, as "stepping stones" to a more competent historian.

# HISTORY OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE NOVATIANS, A. D. 251.

THE NOVATIANS were probably the first organized body of dissenters from the Catholic church. Certainly the first that attracted much attention. There may have been individuals who dissented from the impurities of the church at an earlier period ; and isolated churches, which stood aloof from the Catholic\* party : but, no very general protest was entered against the growing impurities in church order, until the Novatians appeared about the middle of the third century.

And even these church reformers seem not to have protested against all the incipient corruptions which began to show themselves in their day. Their attention was directed, at first, at least, chiefly to a great principle relating to church order—the character of those who should be members of the churches of Christ.

The cursory view which has been given of the progress of church corruption will show, that the positive encroachments of the bishops upon the rights of the presbyters and

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\* I use the term *Catholic*, in its original sense, as synonymous with *general*, to designate the dominant party.

their lay brethren began in this century. And, to give plausibility to their encroachments, some new doctrines respecting the church and the episcopal office were cautiously advanced. But they were so covertly and obscurely brought forward, that they attracted but little attention ; and consequently, occasioned little or no alarm.\*

It was towards the middle of this century that Cyprian, the renowned bishop of Carthage, began to advocate the doctrine, that bishops were "the successors of the apostles ;" and to draw a line of distinction between bishops and presbyters ; and also, to advance some notions, which have been understood to countenance a sort of supremacy in the bishop of Rome.† But while he claimed for bishops a certain superiority in rank over presbyters, "yet, when urged by necessity, he could give up his pretensions, and submit everything to the judgment and authority of the church."‡ And, while he intimated that the bishop of Rome, as the successor of Peter, held a sort of supremacy (*primatum*) in the church, he maintained that there should be nothing insolent or arrogant (*aliquid insolenter, aut arroganter*) in the assumption or exercise of this supremacy.

Hence we may infer, that although there were manifest deviations from the scriptural doctrine of the equality of all

\* See Mosheim, Book I. Cent. III. Part II. Chap. 2.

† See notes on the passage just referred to, in Mosheim's Ecc. History.

‡ Mosheim. See also Milner, particularly Cent. III. Chap. 9.

In one of his letters to his presbyters, written during his retirement from the violence of the Decian persecution, Cyprian says : "To the point concerning which certain presbyters wrote to me, *I can answer nothing alone ; for, from the beginning of my appointment to this see, I determined to do no thing without your consent and the consent of the people.* But when by the favor of God I shall have returned to you, *we will treat in common of all things.*"

bishops and presbyters, in the churches of the third century, yet there was not that avowed rejection of the apostolic model at the time the Novatians appeared, which would have justified any organized opposition to the usurpations of the clergy. Such opposition could not be expected until there were settled and avowed principles or doctrines to be opposed. But even Cyprian, at times the most strenuous and arrogant defender of episcopal power, was far from being fixed and uniform in his ecclesiastical principles and practice. "No man," says Schlegel, "can speak in higher terms of the power of the bishops, than the arrogant Cyprian—that very Cyprian, who, when not fired by any passion, is so condescending towards presbyters, deacons, and the common people."

The historians of the church represent the usurpations of the clergy up to this time, and beyond it even, as of a gradual and insensible character. They were an unobserved, yet powerful under-current, which, while presenting scarcely a ripple on the surface, was yet rapidly bearing towards the vortex most of the rights and privileges of the churches. Or, like the way of a ship when leaving port, whose progress is discoverable rather by a view of what it has left, than by any apparent movement.\*

These remarks may possibly be regarded as irrelevant to the subject under consideration—the dissent of the Novatians; but a moment's reflection may show that they are called for, to account for the fact, that the earliest dissenters from the Catholic church on the score of church order, presented no remonstrance against the usurpations of the clergy over the rights of the churches.

But, to return from this apparent digression, to the circumstances attending the origin of the Novatians. During

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\* See Pref. to Dr. Owen's XXth Vol. Complete Works.

more than thirty years of the first half of the third century—commencing A. D. 211 and extending towards A. D. 249—the churches were exempt from general persecution;\* and enjoyed, for the most part, the protection and sometimes the favor of the Roman emperors. Christians found their way into places of trust and importance, in the army, in the court, and even in the palace. They dared openly to transact their church business; and were allowed to purchase land, and to erect places for public worship within the imperial city itself.

This season of rest was one of outward prosperity, but of inward corruption.†

From this state of repose and corruption, the churches were suddenly aroused by the accession, to the imperial throne, of Decius, A. D. 249. This emperor began the

\* The bishops and ministers of the churches were, for a short time, exposed to persecution, by the edict of the emperor Maximin, A. D. 235—237, while the body of the churches were exempted. The laity were, however, constantly liable to the lawless attacks of the populace, excited by the pagan priests.—See Mosheim, Cent. III. P. II. Chap. 11.

Gibbon, who seems disposed to make as light of the persecutions of the Christians by the pagans, as possible, represents the Christians as enjoying “*a calm of thirty-eight years;*” i. e. from A. D. 211 to 249. He speaks of the sufferings of the Christians under Maximin, as improperly called a persecution, and as “*of a very local and temporary nature.*”—Vol. I. Chap. 16.

† A vivid picture of the corrupt state of the church is given by Cyprian in his treatise concerning the lapsed.—See Milner’s Hist. of the Chh. Cent. III. Chap. 8. Milner says: “The peace of thirty years had corrupted the whole Christian atmosphere.—Chap. 11. Taylor, in his “*Ancient Christianity*” presents us with a most loathsome exhibition of the corruptions of this age—particularly of “the zealous and upright Cyprian’s” “*delinquent stew of ecclesiastical virginity*, at Carthage.”—First Proposition.

most terrible and extensive persecution which the Church of Christ has ever experienced. It extended to all parts of the empire, and involved all classes of Christians, exposing them to every species of suffering. "Immense numbers," says Mosheim, "dismayed, not so much by the fear of death, as by the dread of the long continued tortures, by which the magistrates endeavored to overcome the constancy of Christians, professed to renounce Christ; and procured for themselves safety, either by sacrificing, i. e. offering incense before the idols, or by certificates purchased with money."\* God in mercy to his Church, cut short the career of this monster.† He reigned something less than three years.

On the return of peace, the lapsed and apostate Christians were found at the doors of the churches, seeking admission. And so numerous were they, that they were emboldened to demand admission to church privileges without undergoing the severe penance usually insisted upon in such cases. Many of the bishops and other clergy were for admitting the lapsed on their own terms; some, however, were of a different mind. Among the latter was *Novatian*, a presbyter of the church of Rome. A man of extensive learning, unblemished morals, and devoted piety. He had witnessed with disgust the time-serving and unscriptural management of the bishops and

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\* The reader may find a full and interesting account of this persecution, in Milner's Hist. of the Chh. Cent. III. Chaps. 8—11.

† Gibbon says, so oppressive to the Christians was the government of Decius, "that their former condition, ever since the time of Domitian [A. D. 96], was represented as a state of perfect freedom and security, if compared with the rigorous treatment which they experienced under the short reign of Decius." Lactantius calls him, "*execrable animal*."—See Gibbon, Vol. I. Chap. 16. § 4, and note 121.

their churches, in admitting unworthy members to their communion; and even restoring them to Christian fellowship after they had once apostatized from the faith. By a view of the evils attending this course, he was at length brought to take the high ground—That the church should consist of none but the pure in heart and the blameless in life; and to maintain, that if any one in time of persecution fell away from his Christian steadfastness, he should be utterly repudiated by the church, and on no condition re-admitted to her fellowship. He did not deny the lapsed the hope of final salvation,—he even urged them to repentance, that they might be saved; but he denied them re-admission to the bosom of the Christian church; maintaining, that “the church should be a society of innocent persons, who, from their entrance into it, had defiled themselves with no sin of any considerable magnitude.”

Now, whether or not we can fully justify the ground taken by Novatian, we certainly must admit, that the oscillating course of multitudes who professed the Christian name in those days—now worshipping “Christ as God,” in Christian congregations, and now, sacrificing, before the altars of Paganism, to the gods of the heathen, and denying the Lord that bought them; and anon returning to their profession of Christianity—we must, I say, admit that such conduct was anything but reputable, or commendatory to the cause of Christ. And before we condemn the doctrine of Novatian, we must place ourselves fully in his circumstances, and consider the vast importance of the principle for which he contended.

The principle on which he denied admission to the church of Christ to all but the pure in heart and the blameless in life, is, beyond question, the same on which the apostolic churches were originally gathered. This too, is



one of the fundamental principles of the Congregational system. Indeed, it lies at the very foundation of the whole system. It is hopeless to think of maintaining the Congregational polity where this principle is disregarded.

The talents and piety of Novatian, and the arguments which he drew from the Scriptures and the character of the apostolic churches, soon gathered around him many friends and followers.

In the year A. D. 251 Novatian and his followers separated themselves from the church of Rome; and indeed, from the entire Catholic community: "not for a reason of faith"—for they agreed in doctrinal belief with the great body of the church—but on the ground, that the Catholic church had corrupted herself by the admission of unworthy members, and was no longer a body of "innocent persons;" and that her congregations were no longer entitled to the name of Christian churches.

So agreeable to the convictions of multitudes were these doctrines of Novatian, that, besides the church which was organized by him in Rome, another sprang up in Carthage, by the side of the "arrogant Cyprian;" and within the third century the schism had spread into Gaul. And there were churches in Nice, Nicomedia, in Phrygia, in Constantinople, and probably, in numerous other places, all over the empire, before the close of the fourth century.

"The vast extent of this sect," says Dr. Lardner, "is manifest from the names of the authors who have mentioned them, or written against them, and from the several parts of the Roman empire in which they were found."\*

Robinson, in his *Ecclesiastical Researches*, speaking of the abuse of Novatian by the Catholic writers of his day,

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\* Quoted by Mr. Jones—*Hist. of the Chris. Chh.* Vol. I. p. 318. Eng. Ed.

says: "They call Novatian the author of the heresy of Puritanism; and yet they know that Tertullian had quitted the church near fifty years before, for the same reason; and Privatus,\* who was an old man in the time of Novatian, had, with several more, repeatedly remonstrated against the innovations taking place; and as they could get no redress, had separated and formed separate congregations. They tax Novatian with being the parent of an innumerable multitude of congregations of puritans all over the empire; and yet, he had no other influence over any, than what his good example gave him.† People everywhere saw the same cause of complaint, and groaned for relief; and when one man made a stand for virtue, the crisis had arrived; people saw the propriety of the cure, and applied the same means to their own relief.‡

Gibbon tells us, that about the middle of the fourth century, "A large district of Paphlagonia [a province in the northern part of Asia Minor, on the Euxine Sea] was almost entirely inhabited by those sectaries"—the Novatians.§

The manner in which Socrates, the ancient ecclesiastical historian, accounts for the spread of Novatianism in this, and some other countries, deserves notice. "The Phrygians," he says, "are a nation far more temperate and modest than others, for they swear very seldom. The

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\* Milner mentions Privatus only to call him "an impostor." It would have been more satisfactory had he given us his reasons for so calling him.

† We should infer from this expression that the Novatians recognized another principle of what is now called Congregationalism, namely—*The independency of the churches.*

‡ Jones' Hist. of the Chh. Vol. I. p. 314, 5th Ed.

§ Decline and Fall, Vol. I. p. 467. Harper's Edition.

Scythians and Thracians are hotter and more prone unto anger ; for they that are nearer unto the rising of the sun are set more upon lust and concupiscence. The Paphlagonians and Phrygians are inclined to neither of these perturbations. For at this day [i. e. about the middle of the fifth century] they use no running at tilt, no such warlike exercise, neither do they use to pastime themselves with spectacles and stage plays. *Wherefore these kind of men, in mine opinion, draw nearest unto the drift and disposition of Novatus' letters* [or Novatian's, which he sent abroad explaining his views of church order]. Adultery is accounted among them for a detestable and horrible sin. It is well known that the Phrygian and Paphlagonian trade of life is far modester, and more chaste and continent than any other heretical sect whatsoever. I conjecture that *they* shot at the same modest trade of life which inhabited the west parts of the world, and leaned to Novatus' [Novatian's] opinion."—Lib. IV. Chap. 23.

Such representations of "a heretical sect," by an impartial historian like Socrates, are sufficient praise : and outweigh, and give the lie to all the bitter denunciations of Cornelius of Rome, or Cyprian of Carthage, both of whom, though contemporary, were the prejudiced and bitter enemies of Novatian."\*

Ecclesiastical writers agree in representing Novatian as strictly orthodox in his religious doctrines ; and the sect, as remarkably strict in their discipline, and pure in their morals. Milner, who mourns over the broken unity of the church,—broken, for the first time, by these "schismatics,"

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\* Cornelius calls him "jolly Novatus," and accuses him of "guile and inconstancy," of "perjury, falsehood, and inhumanity," and of "sleights, and devilish subtilties;" and calls him a "deceitful and malicious monster."—Euseb. Lib. VI.

and who "can by no means justify the separation of Novatian," is yet constrained to admit, that these were the most respectable of all the dissenting churches, and that they "preserved for a considerable time, a strictness and purity of discipline and manners;" and "that they held no opinions contrary to the faith of the gospel."\*

Mr. Waddington's account of the Novatians is worth transcribing, not because it adds anything of importance to what has already been adduced, but as the testimony of a candid Episcopalian :

"Novatian, a presbyter of Rome, was a man of great talents and learning, and of a character so austere, that he was unwilling, under any circumstances of contrition, to readmit those who had been once separated from the communion of the church. \* \* He considered the Christian church as a society where virtue and innocence reigned universally, and refused any longer to acknowledge, as members of it, those who had once degenerated into unrighteousness. This endeavor to revive the spotless moral purity of the primitive faith was found inconsistent with the corruptions even of that early age : it was regarded with suspicion by the leading prelates, as a vain and visionary scheme ; and those rigid principles which had characterized and sanctified the church in the first century, were abandoned to the profession of schismatic sectaries in the third."†

The Novatianists were repeatedly condemned by Catholic synods ;‡ but still they increased. And if, as Milner tells us, "purity of principle and inflexibility of discipline were their favorite objects,"§ no good man can do other-

\* Cent. III. Chap. 9.

† History of the Church, p. 79. Harper's Edition.

‡ Eusebius, Lib. VI. Chap. 42.

§ Cent. III. Chap. 11.

wise than rejoice in their prosperity, even though it broke up the ecclesiastical unity of the church.

For several centuries we are able to discover distinct traces of this earliest sect of dissenters; and, alas! that these traces should sometimes be the blood of their martyrs. "Novatian himself, was put to death in the persecution under Valerianus."\* And when the strong arm of the law was moved by '*The Church*,'—so called *par excellence*—these conscientious dissenters were persecuted unto death; or "were obliged to lurk in corners, and worship God in private."†

About the middle of the fourth century a war of conversion or extermination was waged upon such of them as dwelt in the region of Paphlagonia. Macedonius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, supported by the emperor Constantius, "resolved either to convert or extirpate them; and as he distrusted, on this occasion, the efficacy of an ecclesiastical mission, he commanded a body of four thousand legionaries to march against the rebels, and to reduce the territory of Mantinium under his spiritual dominion. The Novatian peasants, animated by despair and religious fury, boldly encountered the invaders of their country; and, though many of the Paphlagonians were slain, the Roman legions were vanquished by an irregular multitude, armed only with scythes and axes; and, except a few who escaped by ignominious flight, four thousand soldiers were left dead on the field of battle."‡

This account may, perhaps, be regarded as a sample of the treatment which these Puritans of primitive times ex-

\* Socrates, Lib. IV. Chap. 22.

† Robinson.

‡ Gibbon, Vol. I. Chap. 21. p. 467. Socrates gives a particular account of this persecution, Ecc. Hist. Lib. II. Chap. 30.

perienced ; though not of their usual method or success in resisting their persecutors.

From some historians we should infer, that the persecuting efforts of the so-called *Catholic church* extinguished the sect of Novatianists before the close of the fifth century. Others, however—and among them Mr. Robinson—tell us, that they continued, under various names, down to the time of the Lutheran Reformation.\*

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\* See Jones' Hist. of the Chris. Chh. Vol. 1. pp. 312, 313. The reader will find a brief account of the Novatians in Mosheim, Cent. III. Part II. Chap. 5. Milner gives a much more full account of them, in connection with the life of his admired Cyprian, their violent enemy.—See particularly the 9th, 10th and 11th chapters of the third century. The reader may collect nearly the whole truth from Milner, and yet, he will hardly fail to be amused by the efforts of that good man to prevent his antipathy to dissenters, from running away with his conscience. He seems to write like a man in a strait betwixt two. He can by no means approve of Novatian's schism ; yet he must admit that the church from which he separated had become very corrupt. His followers were certainly *schismatics* ; and yet, they certainly were very *respectable* and *virtuous*, and enjoyed the presence of God's spirit.

“The author would by no means be understood to encroach upon the right of private judgment. \* \* \* It is the right of *ACTING* according to this right of opinion that is contested,” etc. It might well be answered : Of what value is “the right of private judgment,” if one can have no liberty to follow that judgment in action ? Always supposing that his actions do not interfere with the rights of other men.

“Can it be right,” asks this learned historian, “for a small number of individuals to dissent—and that on no better ground than their own fancy and humor ? \* \* Such however was the first origin of the Novatian schism.”—Cent. III. Chap. 10.

One might retort upon this advocate of Diocesan episcopacy, who is “convinced that the Almighty has not limited his creatures to any particular and strictly defined modes of church government :”—Can it be right to require a small number of indivi-

Of what has now been said of Novatianism, this is the sum: A learned and pious presbyter of the church at Rome, about the middle of the third century, alarmed at the progress of corruption in the churches, occasioned chiefly by a disregard of the apostolic example, in admitting the unworthy to the fellowship of the churches,—after pleading in vain for a reformation in this respect, separated himself from the church at Rome, and formed another, upon this distinctive and fundamental principle—*The church of Christ should consist of none but the truly pious; and if any forfeit this character by an open denial of their faith* (or, as they termed it, “a sin unto death”) *they should be rejected, and never more received into the church.* This principle

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duals, contrary to their private judgment, to conform to “the fancy and humor” of a larger number? If *any one’s* fancy and humor should be consulted, why not one’s own? Why should I be required to conform to a hierarchy, many of whose rites and ceremonies—if not its entire order—have no better foundation than “fancy and humor.”

It is, however, very obvious, that the true ground of dissent, in the case of Novatian, was something widely different from “fancy or humor.” It was *principle*—deep, religious principle—which constrained him to separate from the impure, and increasingly, and hopelessly impure church of his day. It is the same, that has removed thousands of the best of men from the enclosures of the Church of England in later times; the same which, I verily believe, will ultimately reduce all the anti-scriptural hierarchies of Christendom to the simple model of the apostolic churches.

Socrates has given many historical particulars and anecdotes illustrative of the Novatians.—See, in addition to the passages already referred to, Lib. VI. Chaps. 18—21. So favorable are his notices of Novatian and his followers, that his translator deemed it necessary to defend him from this “*slander*.” Sozomon, another ancient ecclesiastical historian, has been suspected of partiality to Novatianism; but, as Gibbon thinks, without sufficient reason.

found advocates in all parts of the Roman empire ; and was adopted and practised upon by multitudes of the most virtuous and excellent persons. Churches were formed all over the empire, and probably continued to exist, under various names, until the dawn of the Reformation.

This sect, though they may have developed but a single principle of the denomination whose history I am attempting to write, deserve the first place among the restorers of "the old paths;" and may with propriety be regarded as the van-guard of that army of church reformers, of which Congregationalists are the re-re-ward.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE RISE AND HISTORY OF THE DONATISTS, A. D. 311.

These, Milner calls, "the second class of dissenters." Like the Novatians, they agreed with the Catholic party in their doctrinal belief, but dissented on the ground of church order. The Donatists believed that the church had so corrupted herself that she was no longer the spouse of Christ ;—"that immorality had unchurched the Catholics, and sunk them into a mere worldly corporation."\* They therefore separated entirely from them ; and would neither commune with the Catholics nor receive them to their churches, until they had been re-baptized.

They appeared, as a distinct sect, early in the fourth century,—A. D. 311—321.

The account given us of the origin of these dissenters, is

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\* Robinson.



not altogether satisfactory ; for the reason, that the *cause* assigned for their rise seems hardly adequate to the effects developed in their history.\* The current account of their origin is briefly as follows : In the year A. D. 311, Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, dying, three rival candidates appeared for the vacant episcopal chair. Caecilian, the arch-deacon of the church, was the successful aspirant. With a degree of haste and irregularity which threw suspicion on the movement, a few of the neighboring bishops proceeded to consecrate the bishop elect. Against this procedure Botrus and Celesius, the rival candidates, and their friends, strenuously protested. They asserted that the ordination of Caecilian was null and void : 1st, Because the bishops of Numidia, a neighboring province attached to the See of Carthage, had not been consulted, or called to take part in the ordination of the new *primate* ;† which was a violation

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\* In addition to the authorities quoted in preceding pages, I have consulted the French historian, *Fleury*, who treats more fully of this schism than any other author to whom I have had access. He is quoted as authority by most others whom I have examined. Milner has followed him very closely. Gibbon's account gives evidence of his familiarity with the French Romanist. So does Waddington's. *Fleury*, though a papist, and sufficiently attached to "*The*" church, and abundantly credulous, when the honor of his saints is concerned,—is yet, apparently, a dispassionate and honest historian.

I have also consulted the "*History of Baptism*" by Robert Robinson, author of *Ecclesiastical Researches*, etc., an English Baptist dissenter, of Socinian principles. He writes like a learned man, though sometimes rather violent in his language. His denominational partialities led him to investigate the views of the early dissenters respecting church order more fully than is apparent in the writings of most other historians.

† This appears to have been the title given to the bishop of Carthage ; who was virtually the *arch-bishop*, patriarch, or pope of Africa.

of established usage, if not of ecclesiastical law. 2dly, Because one or more of the consecrating bishops was a *Traditor*, i. e. one who, to avoid persecution, had delivered the sacred books to the heathen magistrates to be burned. This, they asserted, was true of the principal bishop concerned in the consecration of Caecilian. 3dly, They charged Caecilian with having been "hard-hearted and cruel to the witnesses for Christ, or martyrs, during the persecution of Diocletian; and [that] he had forbidden food to be carried to them in prison."\*

The Numidian bishops, to the number of seventy, having assembled at Carthage, undertook to investigate the affair. But Caecilian and his party refused to appear before them; asserting that the Numidians had been prejudiced by the representations, and bribed by the gold of the other party.† This council, "with the approbation of a considerable part of the clergy and people of Carthage," set aside the ordination of Caecilian, and consecrated Majorinus, one of the deacons of the church, bishop of Carthage.

Thus began the schism of the Donatists, so called, probably, from Donatus, the name of two of their principal bishops.

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\* Mosheim, Vol. I. Cent. IV. Part II. Chap. 5.

† Fleury, Tom. II. p. 668. He says, the Numidians were quartered in the city among those, exclusively, who were opposed to Caecilian; and that Lucilla, a wealthy lady who was personally inimical to Caecilian, had furnished not less than £2000, to bribe and buy up the Numidian bishops. Whatever we may think about the probability of this latter story, it certainly furnishes a hint respecting the reputed morality of the African church, in the fourth century. For further hints, see Taylor's "*Ancient Christianity*." This learned writer in his refutation of Oxford divinity, has as it seems to a humble believer in "the crude assumptions" of modern Congregationalism—completely undermined the foundation of his own admired Church of England.

From Carthage Donatism extended into all parts of Africa, and even into Spain and Italy. In Rome itself there was a considerable congregation of these "schismatics." That they were not in very good repute there, is, however, evident from what Fleury tells us: That, although there were more than forty churches (houses for public worship) in the city, the Donatists could not obtain the use of any one of them; and were therefore compelled to assemble in a cave, in a mountain beyond the city walls; and hence were called *Montenses*, or *Montagnards*, i. e. mountaineers.\* That they occupied this cave for a considerable time, is obvious from the statement which he elsewhere makes—that *six* Donatist bishops, in succession, presided over this church of Montagnards.

In Africa the schism became so extensive and alarming, that in the year 313 the emperor Constantine was induced to adopt measures to stop its progress. He appointed commissioners to examine the controversy. This court decided against the Donatists, so far as their charges against Cæcilian were concerned. This decision might, perhaps, have been anticipated from the character of the judges; who were bishops of that party, from which the Donatists had openly separated as an immoral and corrupt community.

The year following (A. D. 314) another court was held upon the affairs of the Donatists, by Aelian, the pro-consul for Africa. His decision was also unfavorable to the separatists. Another, and larger body of Catholic bishops was called together, the same year, at Arles, to consider these troublesome matters. Their decision was likewise adverse to the interests of the Donatists. Against the de-

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\* Fleury, Tom. III. B. X. pp. 76, 77. B. XII. p. 396.

cisions of these several courts of "High Commissions,"\* the condemned party raised many exceptions; and from his Commissioners, appealed to the emperor Constantine himself. After some hesitation Constantine resolved to hear the parties at Milan; and give judgment in his own person upon these vexed questions. This he did in the year A. D. 316. His decision, like all that had preceded, was adverse to the Donatists.

These "obstinate schismatics" were no better satisfied with the judgment of the emperor, than they had been with his "High Commissioners." They averred that Constantine himself had given a partial decision; that he had been prejudiced against their rights by the misrepresentations of his favorite bishops. But, "as their cause was examined with attention, perhaps, it was determined with justice. Perhaps their complaint was not without foundation, that the credulity of the Emperor had been abused by the insidious arts of his favorite Osius."†

If Fleury's account of the matter be received, we certainly need not wonder at the dissatisfaction of the Donatists. He tells us, that the emperor, so far from considering his own judgment in the case as superior to that of the bishops, who had already examined the controversy—"declared, that "he himself ought to be judged by them; and that he regarded their judgment as that of God himself." And Fleury adds: "He did it then, only to yield to the

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\* Fleury calls these bodies "*Councils*;" but Schlegel, in his note to Mosheim's account, says: "They were not properly *councils*, but rather *courts*, held by special judges appointed by the emperor; or to speak in the language of modern times, *High Commissions*."

† Gibbon.—Bishop Osius, or Hosius, was a favorite with the emperor, and a friend of Caecilian.

importunity of the Donatists, for to close their mouths forever; and to leave no means untried of pacifying the church.”\*

This solemn hearing of the parties before the emperor was, then, no better than an ecclesiastical *ruse*, “to close the mouths of the Donatists forever.” The great man had no thought, it would seem, of correcting the errors of his ecclesiastical commissioners—if any they had committed; he was too modest, even, to think himself capable of such a task. And Fleury certainly assigns a very sufficient reason for this modesty, when he says: “The emperor did not yet well understand the laws” [i. e. as I suppose, the principles on which the church should be organized and governed] “not being baptized, nor even a catechumen.”†

If such be a correct view of the matter, we cannot be surprised that the Donatists were no better satisfied with the decision of Constantine, than with his ecclesiastical commissioners; for it was, in point of fact, nothing but a pre-determined confirmation and sanction of their doings. The emperor consenting to go through the formalities of a public hearing, on the ground “that the Donatists, obstinate as they were, would not submit themselves to the judgment of others;”‡—that is, of any one but the emperor himself.

Constantine, indignant at the failure of all his efforts to silence and reclaim the Donatists, “ordered their temples to be taken from them in Africa;” some of their bishops

\* Ecc. His. Book X. p. 56.

† Book X.—Constantine was not baptized until near his death, during his last illness. Gibbon comments with severity on the indulgence shown to Constantine by the Church.—Vol. I. Chap. 20. “Constantine the Great was baptized by sprinkling, on his bed.”—See Beecher’s Article on Baptism in the Jan. No. of Bib. Rep. 1841.

‡ Fleury, B. X.

to be banished, and others to be put to death. These efforts were continued for about four years, i. e. to A. D. 321 ; when, finding that violence did but beget violence—that the “schismatics” were determined to resist even unto blood ; he was induced to repeal the penal laws against them, and to give liberty of conscience to the Africans to follow either party as they chose. The immediate effect of this decree was to increase the number of the Donatists ; so that they shortly out-numbered, in some places, the Catholics.\* This of course alarmed the clergy of the court. Constantine being now dead, his son Constans, to whom the government of the African provinces had been assigned—was induced to send from his court two legates, Paul and Mercurius, authorized to heal the “deplorable schism.” They were furnished with money and arms ; the former, as the Catholics said, to be distributed among the poor churches ; the latter, as a protection against the *Circumcelliones*.† The Donatists, however, suspected that other uses were to be found for these things ; and facts seem to have justified their suspicions. It was not long before these imperial legates commenced an exterminating or converting war upon the African schismatics. Conversion, banishment, or death, were the alternatives placed before the poor Donatists. A few embraced the former ;

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\* Robinson's Hist. Baptism, p. 197.

† This was the name given to bands of African peasants who, exasperated by the cruelties inflicted on the Donatists, undertook to defend them by fire and sword. If we may believe the Catholic writers, these “vagrants” committed the most wanton cruelties. Fleury tells us of their putting lime and vinegar into the eyes of some of the Catholics. He says they spared neither the aged nor infants. He is careful, however, not to detail the cruelties of the Catholics, which provoked these acts of retaliation.—See his 5th Vol. B. XXIII.

but most of them, one or other of the latter alternatives. This bloody persecution continued thirteen years, i. e. from A. D. 348 to A. D. 361.

The accession of Julian to the imperial throne (A. D. 362) stopped this persecution; restored the banished Donatists to their country; and secured to them their churches and their religious rights. Julian's reign was, however, short. His successor, Gratian, resumed the policy of Constantians. He commanded the temples of the Donatists to be taken from them; and their assemblies to be broken up. But the strength of the Donatists was now so great (A. D. 377), that the emperor dared not press the execution of these persecuting edicts, from fear of a civil war.

At the close of this century the number of Donatist bishops in Africa was estimated at 400.\* The Catholic bishops alarmed by the increase of the Donatists, sent deputies to the emperor Honorius (A. D. 404), to urge the execution of the imperial edicts against "the schismatics" and their defenders, the Circumcelliones. This request was graciously answered, by the imposition of fines upon the common people, and the sentence of banishment upon all the bishops and teachers who refused to return to the bosom of the Catholic church.

The next year (A. D. 405) messengers were sent from the same body—the council of Carthage—to render thanks to Honorius for the destruction of the Donatists.† The triumphing of the bishops was, however, short: for, within about two years they thought it necessary to send another embassy to the emperor, to stir him up to new violence against the Donatists. These efforts not succeeding, the church party, led on by the celebrated Augustine, bishop of Hippo, despatched another commission to the imperial

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\* Mosheim.

† Fleury, B. XXII. p. 280.

court, A. D. 410. By these persevering efforts the Catholics at length obtained the appointment of an *Imperial Commissioner*, Marcellinus, to visit Africa “with power to bring this long and pernicious controversy to a conclusion.”\*

In obedience to the imperial orders, the contending parties assembled at Carthage. The Donatist bishops, Fleury says, entered the city in procession, to the number of 270, drawing all eyes towards them; but the Catholics entered without pomp, in number about 286.† The imperial legate announced to the parties the rules by which the conference, or rather the *trial*, was to be governed.‡ Difficulties arose at the very outset. The Donatists had had sufficient experience of High Commissions to expect no favor from such quarters. They could not but remember that the men who had solicited this commission were their determined enemies. And, that the man who had appointed this commissioner was the same, who, but the year before, had forbidden them to assemble in public for religious worship, on pain of proscription and death.§ They remembered how their fathers were treated at the bar of Constantine: and when they heard Marcellinus declare his inferiority to the bishops, in language very similar to that which Constantine had used—“that he ought to be judged himself by the bishops”||—they could not well avoid intimating their lack of confidence in the pageantry before them; and their conviction that they had been summoned rather to a *trial* than to a conference.

The result justified the suspicions of the Donatists. They were formally condemned; a scale of fines was establish-

\* Mosheim, Cent. V. P. II. Chap. 5.

† Tom. V. B. 22.

‡ For the particulars, see Fleury, who devotes no inconsiderable part of his 22d Book to this important trial.

§ Fleury, Tom. V. B. 22. p. 319.

|| Fleury, ut supra, p. 330.



ed, graduated according to their wealth ; forfeiture of goods was to follow ; corporal punishment was to be inflicted on slaves and peasants ; the clergy were to be banished beyond the limits of Africa ; death itself was to be inflicted upon the more determined and obstinate ; and all their churches were transferred to the Catholics.

This persecution appears to have been conducted with great violence. The party in power seem to have resolved on the utter extirpation of the Donatists. Many of them preferred death even, to a union with such "sinners" and "pagans," as the Catholics were considered. Multitudes fled the country. Others, driven to despair, cast themselves from precipices and perished suicides. So common was this self-immolation among the Circumcelliones, that Fleury says, it was their "*common play*."\* But men are not much given to this kind of 'play' until driven to desperation. If such was the "common play" of the Donatist party, we may easily infer what was the "common play" of the Catholics.

Augustine acted a conspicuous part in exciting and defending these persecuting movements. He maintained, that, though it was better to *draw* than to *drive* the "schismatics" into the truth, yet it was better to *drive* them than to have them perish in error. He justified violence by the example of Paul's conversion ; who was knocked down and made blind, etc. that he might be driven from his errors. He employed the parable of the supper in Luke 14: 16—24, to justify the Catholics in going out into "the highways and hedges" and *compelling* men to come in.† Gibbon tells us, Augustine insisted, that it was better for the Donatists to burn on earth than in hell.‡

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\* Tom. V. B. 23. p. 469.

† See Fleury, ut sup. pp. 471-2.

‡ Gibbon gives a summary, but somewhat particular account of

This violent persecution continued fifteen or sixteen years,—i. e. from A. D. 411 to 427—and greatly weakened the Donatist party. Geneseric, the king of the Vandals, who invaded and conquered Africa in the year 427, showed himself the protector and friend of these persecuted dissenters.\* Under his reign they revived, and flourished again; but they seem never to have recovered fully from the blow inflicted by the long and cruel persecution which they had endured.

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this persecution in Vol. I. Chap. 21, and Vol. II. Chap. 33. Milner puts the conduct of Augustine towards the Donatists in the most favorable light he is able. He extenuates and apologizes as far as his conscience would allow. He tells all the good he knew of the bishop of Hippo—and that was not a little. Yet he admits: "His conduct towards the Donatists bids the fairest for reprehension; but he acted sincerely. You differ with him in judgment, but it is impossible for you to blame his temper and spirit, if you read him candidly. He carefully checks his people for calumniating the Donatists, and is constantly employed in moderating and healing."—See Cent. V. Chaps. 6 and 10.

This is Milner's story; others represent the "saint" as the master spirit of the persecution.

Mr. Robinson is extremely violent in his denunciation of Augustine. He says: "When the Donatists reproached him with making martyrs of their bishops and elders, as Marculus, Maximian, Isaac, and others, and told him God would require an account of their blood at the day of judgment, he answered: 'I, I know nothing about your martyrs. Martyrs, martyrs to the devil! They were not martyrs; it is the *cause*, not the *suffering* that makes a martyr. There is no such thing as a martyr out of the church [i. e. the Catholic church.] Besides, it was owing to their obstinacy; they killed themselves; and now you blame the magistrate.'"—History of Baptism, p. 199.

\* Gibbon ascribes the success of Geneseric to the persecution, and consequent co-operation with the Vandals, of the Donatists.—Vol. II. Chap. 33. Milner rejects this intimation with considerable warmth.—Cent. VI. Chap. 6, note.

They continued to exist, as a distinct body, amidst the various revolutions in the country, for more than a century and a half. The last notice of them is found near the close of the sixth century; when their increasing efforts to rise, and propagate their peculiar tenets were met by the vigorous opposition of Gregory the Great; which, we are led to believe, was so far successful as to drive the Donatists "into corners," if not absolutely to destroy them.\*

The view which has now been taken of the history of this "second class of dissenters," will justify, I think, the assertion that the *cause* usually assigned for the rise of the Donatists is scarcely adequate to the effects developed in their history.

The simple question, whether Caecilian or Majorinus should be bishop of Carthage, seems insufficient to account for the immediate formation of a distinct class of religionists throughout Africa. It is true, "a little fire" will kindle "a great matter;" but it requires some time for the process to be effected. Donatism seems to have sprung up almost at once, in its full proportions; and armed with principles so strong, that neither flattery nor bribery could overcome them; and which defied even the pains and penalties of confiscation of goods, corporal punishment, banishment or death itself.

The repeated condemnation of the Donatists by the Roman emperors, and their legates, and high commissioners, has been regarded as *primâ facie* evidence against the sect.

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\* See Mosheim, Cent. VI. P. II. Chap. 5. This was the same Gregory who abhorred human learning in the clergy; who defended the use of images in the churches; who flattered Phocas the usurper and murderer; who was an enthusiastic promoter of monkery, and the honor of his see.—Mosheim, Vol. I. passim, particularly p. 399, note 29. Harper's Ed. Also, Jones' Hist. of the Christian Church, Vol. I. pp. 375—387.

But, a consideration of the fact that the very enemies of the Donatists admitted their soundness in the faith, and earnestly desired their union with the Catholic church;\* that there was a fair proportion of learned and pious men among their clergy, and of “truly humble and godly persons” among the laity;† affords presumptive evidence that this schism had for its foundation something better than mere caprice and prejudice;—that it must have lain upon some broad and important principle. Nothing else could have prevented its early and total overthrow.

This presumption is confirmed by Dr. Lardner’s account of this sect; a summary of which is given by Mr. Jones, *Hist. Chh.* Vol. I. pp. 388—390: “The Donatists appear to have resembled the followers of Novatian more than any other class of professors in that period of the church, of whom we have any authentic records. \* \* They agreed

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\* Augustine, during the trial at Carthage, A. D. 411, declared the readiness of the African bishops to receive the Donatists to their churches, and their bishops to their Catholic sees.—See Fleury, B. 22.

† Milner, *Cent. V.* Chap. 6, professes his belief, that “there were many such [among the Donatists] in Africa.” It is not, to be sure, very obvious how this assertion can be reconciled with another by this historian (*Cent. IV.* Chap. 2.), where he says: “With the Donatists there does not appear to have been any degree of real spirituality.” But it is not my business to reconcile Milner with himself. I marvel that some of his admirers have not attempted it.

The anxiety of the Catholics to bring the Donatists into The Church, and their readiness to admit the “schismatic” bishops to catholic seats, is sufficient evidence of the correctness of Mosheim’s assertion: “That the Donatists were sound in doctrine, their adversaries admit; nor were their lives censurable, if we except the enormities of the Circumcelliones, which were detested by the greatest part of the Donatists.”—*Cent. IV.* P. II. Chap. 8.

with Novatian in censuring the lax state of discipline in the Catholic church. \* \* They denied the validity of baptism as administered by the church of Rome, and rebaptized all who left its communion to unite with them. \* \* In doctrinal sentiments they agreed with both the Catholics and the Novatians; while the regard they paid to the purity of their communion, occasioned their being stigmatised with the title of Puritans, and uniformly treated as schismatics by Optatus and Augustine, the two principal writers against them, in the Catholic church. \* \* Donatus was a man of learning and eloquence, very exemplary in his morals, and, as would appear from several circumstances, studiously set himself to oppose the growing corruptions of the Catholic church.”

The violent enmity of the professedly Christian Roman emperors and their favorite bishops towards this persecuted sect is, perhaps, sufficiently accounted for by two oft repeated inquiries of the Donatists, when urged to unite with the “established church:”—“*QUID EST IMPERITORE CUM ECCLESIA ?*”—*What business has the emperor to meddle with the church ?* “*QUID CHRISTIANIS CUM REGIBUS, AUT, QUID EPISCOPIS CUM PALATIO ?*”—*What have Christians to do with kings, or what have bishops to do with the court ?* These few words throw a flood of light on the principles of the Donatists. They show us that they were opposed to the unholy alliance of Church and State, which was consummated in their day;—that they had no fellowship with the pomp and pride and courtly manners of the Catholic bishops, and the consequent corruptions of the laity—*Quid Christianis cum regibus ?* They prepare us to believe Mr. Robinson, when he says :

“The Donatists thought the church ought to be kept separate from the world, a religious society voluntarily con-

gregated together for pious purposes, and for no other. With this view they admitted none without a personal profession of faith and holiness, and then they baptized; or, if they had belonged to the great corrupt party, re-baptized. They urged for all this, the New Testament. The Catholics, of whom Austin [Augustine] was the head, taxed them with denying in effect, if not in express words, the Old Testament, and particularly such prophecies as spoke of the accession of kings, and Gentiles, and nations to the Church of Christ. "Is it not foretold," said Austin, "that, '*To me every knee shall bow?*'" The Catholics, then, were for a national church for the sake of splendor; *the Donatists for a Congregational church for the sake of purity of faith and manners.\**

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\* Robinson's History of Baptism, pp. 197—200.

It is worthy of remark, that when the Separatists, who were afterwards called Independents and Congregationalists, first appeared in England, the Church and State party denounced them as *Donatists*. In 1590 appeared "*A short Treatise against the Donatists of England, whom we call 'Brownists,'*" etc. And in the following year, "*A Plain Declaration that our Brownists be full Donatists; by comparing them together, from point to point, out of the writings of Augustine;*" both by "George Giffard, Minister of God's Holy Word in Maldon."—Hanbury's Memorials, p. 49.

## CHAPTER III.

## LUCIFERIANS.—ÆRIANS.

He alone who attempts to investigate the origin of the early schisms in the Christian Church can be fully sensible of the difficulty of the task. The account given us of the commencement of the Luciferian schism is nearly as unsatisfactory as that of the Donatist; indeed, the two are not very dissimilar. “Lucifer,” says Mosheim; “bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia,\* a man of decision, sternness, and vigor, \* \* first separated from *Eusebius* of Vercelli, in the year 363, because the latter was displeased that the former had consecrated *Paulinus* bishop of the church of Antioch; and he afterwards separated himself from the communion of the whole church, because it had decreed, that absolution might be granted to those bishops who, under *Constantius*, had deserted to the Arians.”†

According to this account, which agrees substantially with Socrates’ (Lib. III. Chap. 7. Lib. V. Chap. 5.) and Milner’s (Cent. IV. Chap. 9.), the schism originated in a personal quarrel between two orthodox bishops; and was irreconcilably widened by the decree of the council of Alexandria, which ordained, that “the Arian bishops, and still more those who had only held communion with such bishops might, after acceding to the Nicene creed [which was the standard of ancient orthodoxy], be received into the church, and remain in their offices.”‡

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\* Cagliari was the metropolis of Sardinia and the neighboring isles.—Fleury.

† Vol. I. B. 11. Cent. IV. P. II. Chap. 3.

‡ See Schlegel’s note to Mosheim’s account.

Socrates represents Lucifer as particularly vexed at this decree, because, though not present himself at the council, he had sent his deacon,\* authorized to act in his name, and had bound himself to observe the decision of the council. Whether this was true or not, it is very certain that the dissatisfied bishop did not long observe the commandments of men, which were contrary to the convictions of his conscience. If bound while in "The Church" to observe the decrees of the council, which spoke in the name of the Church, he soon relieved himself of all obligation, by separating himself entirely from this corrupt body, and establishing a church upon principles more agreeable to his convictions of truth.

The materials for a sketch of this denomination of Christian dissenters are very few. Of *Lucifer*, the founder of it, the general voice of historians is very favorable. "No man," says Milner, "ever exceeded Lucifer in courage and hardness of spirit." \* \* "Lucifer was consistent throughout."† In another place he speaks of his "magnanimous constancy" and "sincere spirit of piety" in defending the "Nicene faith."‡ Again, in speaking of the different classes of dissenters who had appeared within the first four centuries, he says: "A fourth appears, the Luciferians, who, if they imbibed the spirit of Lucifer, must have been firm and sincere in the "love of the truth." And further on, he says: "The spirit of the gospel probably prevailed most among the Luciferians." He afterwards draws a picture of those times (the middle of the fourth century), and contrasts it with one of later days. "Damascus, orthodox, and violent in the support of orthodoxy, without humility and piety, is as strong a contrast to the primitive

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\* Fleury says *two* deacons, and gives their names, B. 15. p. 58.

† Cent. IV. Chap. 9.

‡ Cent. IV. Chap. 4.



bishops, as Sharpe, archbishop of St. Andrews, in the time of Charles II. is to our first reformers. *The persecuted Luciferians may seem to resemble the Puritans of the same period* ; while such men as Eusebius of Vercellae, and Hilary of Poitiers, may be likened to archbishop Leighton.”\* This is certainly high praise, coming from such a man as Mr. Milner.

Fleury tells us that Lucifer’s contempt for the world, his love for the Holy Scriptures, the purity of his life, his constancy in the faith had, previous to his schism, rendered him illustrious in the church.† He was the pope’s legate at the council of Milan ; which is a sufficient proof of his rank in the church.

After his separation from the Catholics, the same author informs us, that he was accused of nothing but his inflexi-

\* Cent. IV. Chap. 12. Damascus obtained the bishopric of Rome, A. D. 366, after “ a bloody warfare ” with a rival candidate, “ in which there was fighting, burning of buildings, and many lives lost. ”—See Mosheim, Cent. IV. B. II. P. II. Chap. 2.

Sharpe, during the protectorate of Cromwell, was a Scotch Presbyterian, and a professor in St. Andrew’s University. He was sent as commissioner to support the cause of Presbyterianism, first to London, and afterwards to the island of Breda, to treat with Charles II. about his restoration. On the restoration of Charles, Sharpe abandoned his old friends, and became the advocate of prelacy ; for which he was rewarded by the gift of the archbishopric of St. Andrews. His perfidy made him odious to the Presbyterians. His cruelty to the Covenanters, and his supposed agency in the persecution of those who dissented from the Church of England, has loaded his name with infamy. Repeated attempts were made upon his life ; and he finally perished by the hands of nine assassins, who dragged him from his coach, and stabbed him in twenty-two places.—See Hume’s Hist. Eng. Vol. IV. pp. 181, 227, 305, 343 ; and Edinb. Encyc.—Art. Sharpe.

† Tom. III. B. 13. p. 414.

ble obstinacy—they did not accuse him of any error in faith.\*

Mr. Robinson gives the following brief account of this sect: “There was a party nearer to Augustine than the Donatists, who were called Luciferians, from Lucifer; \* \* a man of eminent piety and goodness. He and his followers held the doctrine of the Trinity; they re-baptized nobody; and their lives were exemplary: but they held separate assemblies, and would not hold communion with Austin’s [Augustine’s] worldly church. *They were a sort of Trinitarian Independents.* The Donatists were Trinitarian Anabaptists. \* \* Austin held all in like execration, for all stood in the way of that hierarchy which this Carthaginian genius was endeavoring to set up. While each bishop tyrannized over his own congregation, all was easy; but when one in the chair had begun to treat the bench as the bench had treated the people, the bench rebelled against the chairman, and made the people free for the sake of being free themselves.”†

The cause here assigned for the rise of both the Luciferians and Donatists is certainly reasonable. The tyranny of the principal bishops over their inferiors, and the arbitrary and oppressive canons of the provincial councils, which assumed the right to make laws for the government of all the churches within their limits,—would naturally excite the inquiry in the minds of the oppressed: “By what authority doest thou these things; and who gave thee this authority?” This vein of thought once struck, and the Scriptures taken as a guide, would unavoidably result in the discovery of the great principles on which modern Congregationalists have built their system of church order.‡

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\* Book 15. p. 69.

† History of Baptism, p. 200.

‡ The history of the recent schism in the Methodist Episcopal

The Luciferians seem not to have been very numerous. The schism was confined chiefly to Sardinia and Spain. There were, however, assemblies of Luciferians in Rome as early as A. D. 367—374, notwithstanding they were forbidden to come within a hundred miles of the city. They were not only subject to trial and condemnation by the Catholic bishops, but were forbidden to appeal to the emperor for any revision of catholic decisions. Under this law, Damascus, bishop of Rome, caused several Luciferian priests and laymen to be arrested and exiled. One of

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Church, in this country, furnishes an illustration of the above remarks. One of the leaders in this schism—Rev. George Storrs—has recently “defined his position,” by stating his utter abhorrence of Episcopacy, and his cordial reception of Congregationalism or Independency. Now, what has brought him and his friends to this position? The historian of that church would, without doubt say: The difficulty they experienced in that Church, in carrying out their favorite measures for the abolition of slavery. A person unacquainted with the whole affair, would very naturally ask:—What connection is there between the cause and the effect? It is only by knowing the whole history of the difficulties, that we can answer this question. And even then, we shall be unable to perceive any connection between the cause, abstractly considered, and the effect practically developed. The whole story may be briefly thus told: Mr. Storrs and his clerical friends were easy under Methodist Episcopacy—though it deprives the people, as such, of any voice in the government of the church—until they began to feel the power of the bishops and of the General Conference in controlling their movements as abolitionists:—the bishops presiding in the Yearly Conferences refused to put their anti-slavery motions; and the General Conferences passed decrees prohibiting “any travelling preacher from engaging in any agency for any object not approved by the General Conference.” These things led the aggrieved brethren to inquire—“By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? The result of this inquiry may be found in the “American Wesleyan Observer” for Aug. 13, 1840.

these priests was accused of holding a conventicle in a private house in the night time. All the efforts of their persecutor could not prevent Aurelius and his successor Ephesius, Luciferian bishops, from remaining in the city until the time of their deaths.\*

It was the fortune of the Luciferians to live amidst the fires of the Arian controversy. And, having little sympathy with either the Arians or the Orthodox, in their struggle for supremacy in the empire, they suffered persecution from both parties: in which respect they resembled the Separatists—the strictest portion of the English Puritans, and the immediate ancestors of the Congregationalists—as well as in their views of Christian doctrine and practice, and the independency of their churches.

#### THE ÆRIANS.

Nearly contemporary with Lucifer (A. D. 363) appeared Ærius. He was a native of Pontus, a province of Asia Minor. Fleury represents him to have been an Ascetic. He was the intimate friend and fellow monk of Eustathius, who was afterwards raised to the bishopric of Sebaste, a city in the northern part of ancient Cappadocia. This elevation of his companion is said to have excited the jealousy and ambition of Ærius. Eustathius did what he could to appease him; he ordained him presbyter, and gave him the chaplaincy of a hospital, or a house for the entertainment of strangers; but nothing would satisfy him. Cares and menaces were equally ineffectual. Ærius at length broke away from his friend and the Catholic church, and began to preach doctrines which neither Eustathius nor

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\* Fleury, Book 15th and 16th, *passim*.

the church could at all approve. Such, for substance, is Fleury's account of the rise of Ærianism.\*

From a comparison of several accounts of this matter, I suppose the truth to be very nearly as follows: Ærius, like many others of his day, disgusted with the pride and tyranny of the bishops, may have remonstrated with his friend Eustathius for taking a bishopric, or for following in the beaten track of episcopal usurpations. Eustathius, with the hope of stilling his reprovcr, ordained him a presbyter, and made him his private chaplain. Finding that these favors did not remove the objections of Ærius, he next resorted to threats. But neither excommunication nor any other ecclesiastical punishment had sufficient terrors to stop the mouth of the dissenter. Finding his remonstrances with his friend fruitless, and his efforts at reform in the church unavailing, he at length decided, as Novatian and Donatus and Lucifer had before him, to abandon a communion in which so much error and corruption were allowed. Having resigned his station in the hospital of Sebaste, he at once avowed himself the advocate of the simple and primitive organization and worship of the church. He maintained first of all, "*That (jure divino), by divine appointment, there was no difference between bishops and presbyters;*" 2. That prayers for the dead were wrong; and 3. That the feasts and fasts observed by the church on set days were Jewish, rather than Christian observances.

These doctrines—so directly opposed to the teachings and practice of the Church of that day—he supported by appeals to the Scriptures. Such were the outlines of Ærius's system of church reform.

"He seems," says Mosheim, "to have aimed to reduce religion to its primitive simplicity." And, it is a proof that

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\* Tom. IV. B. 19.

there were some remains of primitive feelings among the people, that his doctrine respecting the equality of bishops and presbyters “was very pleasing to many, who were disgusted with the pride and arrogance of the bishops of that age.”\*

This advocate for “primitive simplicity” in the order of the church, in opposition to the usurpations of the bishops; and for the same simplicity in the worship of the church, in opposition to the growing errors, and superstitions, and idolatries of the people—found “a great multitude” (to use Fleury’s own words) to follow him. Armenia, Pontus, and Cappadocia were rent by the schism.†

The Catholic doctors attempted by their writings to refute the “heresies” of this reformer. Among them Epiphanius, bishop of Salamina, in Cyprus, took the lead. According to Fleury, he “refuted the heresy principally by an appeal to *tradition* and the *consent of all the churches*.”‡ An example which the advocates for diocesan Episcopacy, and the oppugners of the Congregational doctrine—that bishops and presbyters are, *jure divino*, of the same rank—have wisely followed, from the days of “St. Epiphanius” to the present time. Such arguments were then, as they are now, lightly esteemed by those who took the Scriptures for their guide. The Catholics, not content with denouncing, and, in their judgment, refuting the heresy, resorted to more pungent, if not more convincing arguments. “They drove the Ærians every where from the churches, from the cities, and the villages.” But this, it seems, did not quench their zeal for the truth; for, “They assembled in the woods, in caverns, in the open country, even sometimes when covered with snow.”§

\* Mosheim. † Ibid. ‡ Tom. IV. B. 19. pp. 672, 673.

§ Fleury, Tom. IV. B. 19. pp. 672, 673.

Thus these advocates for church reform resembled the primitive Christians in their *sufferings* as well as in their *doctrines*; and shared the fate of all who had preceded them as church reformers.

Whether Ærius was “*entirely Arian*,” as Fleury asserts, or “*Semi-Arian*,” as Mosheim says, or entirely sound and orthodox in the faith—it is evident, that he was a man of talents, and learning, and eloquence; and what is better than all, a man who regarded the Scriptures as a sufficient, and the only infallible guide to the order and worship of the Church, as well as the religious faith of Christians. This appears from the very doctrines which he professed, as well as from his appeals to the Scriptures in defence of these doctrines.\*

Instead of being branded as a heretic, Ærius ought to be regarded as one of those, who, in an age of great degeneracy, when the Church had grievously departed from “the right way,” and was “bent to backsliding” yet more and more,—stood in the ways and asked for the old paths (Jer. 6: 16), wherein Christ and his apostles had walked; and having found them, proclaimed the truth to others.

Had this warning voice been heeded, the flood of corruption which was beginning to overflow the Church would have been stayed; the pride, ambition, and usurpations of the bishops would have been checked; the superstitious and idolatrous worship of the dead would have been prevented; and the entire order and worship of the church would have been brought back to that “primitive simplicity” which was the beauty and the glory of the apostolic churches.

The accusation, that “Ærius was anxious to be a bish-

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\* See particularly Schlegel's note to Mosheim's account, Cent. IV. B. II. P. II. Chap. 3.

op,” and because Eustathius outran him in the race of ambition, he therefore conceived “a furious jealousy against his friend;”<sup>\*</sup> carries with it its own refutation. Had Ærius wished to become a bishop, he certainly was in the highway to that honor before he separated from the Church. The confidential friend and private chaplain of a bishop—who so likely to be promoted to the next vacant see in the neighborhood? Under such circumstances, would Ærius have broken friendship with the bishop of Sebaste, had he wished to rise in the Church? He would have been far more likely to have played the sycophant—the humble servant to his friend the bishop.

Schlegel tells us, that Ærius accused his bishop and his friend “of avarice and misappropriation of the funds for the poor;” an accusation far more likely to be true than that which has been laid at the presbyter’s door; for avarice and dishonesty were sins in which the bishops of that age very freely indulged. The discovery of such propensities in the bishop of Sebaste would have furnished a much more satisfactory ground for the breach between the two friends, than that which Fleury assigns.

Be this as it may, one thing is certain, Ærius embraced one of the leading doctrines of modern Congregationalism—*That, jure divino, there is no difference between bishops and presbyters*—and acted upon one of the fundamental principles of this system, viz. *That the Scriptures are a sufficient guide to church order, as well as religious faith*; and therefore deserves a place in the history of Congregationalism.

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<sup>\*</sup> See Fleury, ut supra—also Schlegel, in Mosheim.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE HISTORY OF THE PAULICIANS, A. D. 660.

THE PAULICIANS were dissenters from the corruptions of the Greek and Romish churches. Their history is involved in much obscurity ; and contradictory accounts are given of their religious tenets. They are often confounded with other sects, as indeed were many of the ancient schismatics and heretics ; and sentiments are ascribed to them which they, without doubt, abhorred. These things are to be attributed to the ignorance and prejudice of their enemies ; to whom we are almost exclusively indebted for our knowledge of this interesting sect of Christians. From a comparison of several accounts, I have drawn up the following sketch of their history and peculiarities, so far as these come within the design of this work.\*

About the year of our Lord 660, there lived in an obscure village near the city of Samosata, not far from the borders of Armenia and Syria,† a humble man named *Constantine*. This man, acting in the spirit of the apostle's directions, though perhaps ignorant of the letter, re-

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\* Mosheim and Gibbon are my principal authorities. With these I have compared Jones, Milner, and Waddington, who appear to have relied almost exclusively on the first named authors for their facts.

† According to Phocius and Peter Siculus, the two original authorities upon this sect, Constantine was a native of Armenia ; but Samosata, or Samiscat, lies on the Euphrates, between 36 and 38° north latitude and the same parallels of west longitude, and within the limits of ancient Syria. The south eastern corner of Armenia approaches near to Syria.

ceived to his house a travelling stranger. The stranger proved to be a Christian deacon returning from Syria, whither he had been carried captive by the victorious Mohammedans, who were then extending their conquests over the empire of the East. Having enjoyed the hospitality of Constantine, the traveller gave him in return a Greek New Testament. It may have been all that he had to give: or perhaps he discovered from the conversation of his host, that no remuneration would be so highly valued as the sacred book.

In an age like that of which I now write,—when it was scarcely a reproach to a bishop to subscribe the acts of an ecclesiastical council by the hand of another, because he could not write himself,—a copy of the New Testament was indeed a treasure; and the disposition and ability to read it, were alike honorable to the heart and the head of any one. This honor Constantine merits; for he immediately began to study with diligence the sacred writings. A careful study of them begot in him, as it has in thousands of others, a reverential regard for the sacred volume. It soon became “the measure of his studies, and the rule of his faith.”\* Adopting this measure, and following this rule, he was brought gradually to embrace opinions entirely at variance with the doctrines of the church of his day. 1. In the first place, adopting the New Testament as a perfect guide to religious truth, he utterly disregarded and repudiated all “the opinions, gospels, epistles, and acts,” which had come to be of nearly or equal authority in the church, with the Scriptures themselves. 2. He maintained, that “the New Testament ought to be read assiduously, and by

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\* Gibbon. All the quotations from Gibbon, under this head, will be found in Vol. IV. Chap. 54 of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

*all* the people ;” in opposition to the teachings of the church, that the priests alone should be intrusted with the sacred treasure. 3. Not finding in the New Testament a recognition of the three orders of clergy—bishops, presbyters, and deacons,—he rejected this dogma of the church as unscriptural. He believed that all religious teachers were “equals in rank ;” and that they should be “distinguished from laymen, by no rights, prerogatives, or insignia.” 4. The authority of councils to govern the church, he did not recognize ; neither indeed, were any such institutions known among his followers. 5. In a word, he utterly rejected the whole hierarchal system of church government then in vogue.\*

Such were some of the results of Constantine’s investigation of “the creed of primitive Christianity.” These discoveries entitle him to a prominent place among the ancestors of the denomination whose history we are tracing.

In connection with his primitive views of church order and government, he discovered and developed other views of religious truth equally sound. As, for example—the folly and sin of worshipping the Virgin Mary,—of looking to the mediation of saints and angels for favor with God, or of idolizing the work of the sculptor or painter ;—the worthlessness of all *relics*, whether bones or ashes ;—the impiety of all worship of the cross, a piece of mere wood ;—and the absurdity of regarding the eucharistic wine and bread as anything but “the gifts of nature and the symbols of grace,” the *emblems* of the body and the blood of of Christ.† That all these important truths were at once

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\* This account of the ecclesiastical tenets of Constantine, I have drawn chiefly from Mosheim, Vol. II. Book III. Cent. IX. P. II. Chap. 5.

† See Gibbon.

discovered and proclaimed by the father of the Paulicians, I do not assert ; but, that these were the distinguishing peculiarities of this sect, is perfectly apparent from the accounts given us by the very enemies of this Protestant sect. And if so, the taunt of the Romanists—that “ the Protestants were the progeny of the Paulicians,”—will scarcely be regarded as a reproach.\*

It is true, that those who hated and persecuted these lovers and followers of “ primitive simplicity” in the order and worship of the church, charge them with numerous and detestable errors ; just as the ancient heathen did the primitive disciples of Christ. The Paulicians are represented as denying God to have been the creator of “ this lower and visible world ;” as believing that matter was eternal ; and that light and darkness were the originals, or “ two first principles of all things,” over each of which an independent Lord had reigned eternally. They are accused of rejecting the Old Testament Scriptures entirely ; and disregarding the sacrament of the Lord’s supper ; and, in various other particulars, of following the vagaries of Manes :—In short, they are charged with being *Manichaeans*. This charge they indignantly repelled. “ They sincerely condemned the memory and opinions of the Manichaean sect, and complained of the injustice which impressed that invidious name on the simple votaries of St. Paul and of Christ.”†

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\* Bossuet says this, in his “ *Historie des Variations des Englisches Protestant* ;—See Moshem, ut sup. note 6. Tr.

† Gibbon. Manes or Manichaeus, was a Persian magi, who embraced Christianity in the fifth century. He was, for his time, learned in the arts and sciences ; a man of genius, eloquence, and exuberant imagination ; grave in aspect, and simple and innocent in his life. He became the father of a numerous progeny, who were troublers of the church for many ages. His great object seems to have been

That the Paulicians were not Manichaeans, is evident from their own solemn denial of the charge, and from the very tenets which their enemies ascribe to them. The Manichaeans rejected the Old Testament and a large part of the New as fabulous and false ; and maintained that even what remained, was interpolated and somewhat corrupted. They substituted another gospel for the writings of the four Evangelists.

In opposition to all this, the Paulicians cordially received, and highly revered the gospels, and acts of the apostles, and all the other books of the New Testament, with, perhaps, the exception of the two epistles of Peter ; and Milner regards it as very improbable that they made even this exception. As it respects the Old Testament Scriptures, it is obvious that one cannot easily receive and reverence the New Testament, and yet reject and deny the authority of the Old ; since Christ and his apostles are continually referring to and quoting the “ Law and the Prophets.”

Gibbon, while he admits the correctness of this charge against the followers of Constantine, says : “ Their utmost diligence must have been employed to dissolve the connec-

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to reconcile Christianity and the Persian mythology. For this purpose he is said to have given out, that Christ left his system but imperfectly revealed, and that he (Manes) was the *Paraclete* or Comforter, who was to complete the work. By the aid of his genius and imagination he wrought out of the Christian system and that of the magi, one that suited his taste better than either. Some of his notions are alluded to in the text. For a more particular account, see Mesheim, Book I. Cent. III. P. II. Chap. 5. This sect, or branches of it, were the bane and curse of the Church for ages ; and it seems to have been a favorite device of the churchmen of different periods, to doom the troublesome sectaries of their day by giving them the odious title of *Manichaeans*. They acted upon a well established principle of Lynch law, that “ a bad name will hang a dog.”

tion between the Old and New Testament." Mr. Jones' solution of this difficulty is probably a true one. "The advocates of popery, to support their usurpations and innovations in the kingdom of Christ, were driven to the Old Testament for authority, adducing the kingdom of David for their example. And when their adversaries rebutted the argument, insisting that the parallel did not hold, for that the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, is a very different state of things from the kingdom of David, their opponents accused them of giving up the divine authority of the Old Testament."\* The rejection of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, with which they are charged, may be accounted for in the same way. They rejected the dogma of the church, that after consecration the eucharistic bread and wine became the real body and actual blood of Jesus Christ. Their candid adversaries immediately charged them with a contempt for the ordinance itself.

Milner, who no one will accuse of partiality towards sectaries, gives no credit to the charges of Manichaeism and heresy which have been so plentifully heaped upon this interesting sect of dissenters. He speaks of them as originating "from a heavenly influence, teaching and converting them;" and as being the recipients of "one of those extraordinary effusions of the Divine Spirit, by which

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\* History of the Christian Church, Vol. I. pp. 423, 424. 5th Ed. Would such a misrepresentation be more strange than one which is found in the "Encyclopaedia Americana," which gives, as a description of the English Congregationalists or Independents, that they "now differ from other Protestant sects in rejecting any formula of faith, requiring only a belief in the gospel; and *their pastors are not ordained*?" That is, because they have not received the imposition of a diocesan bishop's hands, therefore "their pastors are not ordained." The first charge is probably equally groundless.

the knowledge of Christ and the practice of godliness is kept alive in the world.”\*

The particularity with which I have described the origin and peculiarities of the Paulicians will be appreciated as we proceed in their history.

Constantine having discovered, as he believed, the true light, was anxious to communicate the same to others. He accordingly began to preach “primitive Christianity” in the regions of Pontus and Cappadocia; regions doubly dear to this preacher of righteousness, because once the field of *Paul’s* labors—the favorite apostle of the rising sect, and after whom they probably called themselves *Paulicians*. The strength of his principles, the reasonableness and scriptural nature of his doctrines, his arguments and eloquence soon collected around him numerous disciples. These were gathered into churches, six of which, out of respect to the memory of their favorite apostle, were named after those churches to which his epistles were originally addressed.

The Paulician teachers, aiming to restore the simplicity and beauty of the primitive order and worship of the church, and taking the New Testament for their unerring guide—refused to be called “Rabbi;” claiming only the modest title of “*Fellow Pilgrims*.” And by a conceit, pardonable, if not justifiable, they dropped their own names, and assumed those of the fellow-laborers of the apostles. Constantine was called Sylvanus; another distinguished teacher was called Sergius; others were named Titus, Timothy, Tychicus, etc. “The austerity of their lives, their zeal or knowledge” gave them great influence with the people. Success attended their labors, and the new sect spread itself rapidly over Asia Minor.

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\* Church Hist. Cent. IX. Chap. 2.

After seven and twenty years of labor and success, the founder of this sect took up his abode near Colonia, on the river Lycus, in the northern part of ancient Pontus. While here, complaint was made to the emperor, Constantine Pogonatus, of this presumptuous heretic. Pogonatus ordered a commissioner, Simeon, by name, to proceed to Colonia and investigate the matter. Armed with legal and military authority, the commissioner investigated the case sufficiently to be satisfied that Constantine was a dangerous man to "*the Church*," if not to the State ; and consequently condemned him to be stoned to death. In order to aggravate the sufferings of the teacher, and to punish the temerity of his disciples, the commissioner placed the venerable Sylvanus before a company of his own followers who were commanded, "as the price of their pardon and the proof of their repentance, to massacre their spiritual fathers."\* But a single Judas was found among them all. One Justus alone preferred his own safety to his teacher's life ; and was canonized by the Catholics as "a new David, who boldly overthrew the giant of heresy;" while he was doubtless execrated by the Paulicians, as a new Judas, who basely betrayed his innocent master. Their leader dead, the disciples were scattered like sheep without a shepherd. The laws of "the divine and orthodox emperors" against the Manichaeans and Montanists, were turned against these advocates of primitive Christianity. Capital punishment was inflicted upon them ; their books, wherever found, were burned ; and death and confiscation of goods were the doom of all who harbored and concealed them.†

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\* Gibbon. This very commissioner afterwards became a Paulician missionary ; counting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the honors of the empire.

† Peter Siculus, in Gibbon, note 14.



This persecution produced its usual effects. If some were frightened into apostasy, others were made more stable and bold in the faith. "From the blood and ashes of the first victims, a succession of teachers and congregations repeatedly arose." It was found more easy to kill the bodies than to quench the invincible spirit of the Paulicians. For one hundred and fifty years, they endured whatever malice and power could inflict. Like the bush at Horeb, they were enveloped in flames, but were not consumed. Primitive truth made them like primitive Christians: they were neither afraid nor unwilling to die in defence of their faith.

But to be more particular: The murder of Sylvanus and the dispersion of his disciples seems to have quieted, for a season, the fears of the churchmen. In the succeeding reign, of Justinian II. (A. D. 685—711\*) they were again complained of, and "their principal leader was burned alive."† Blood was a luxury to Justinian II., "and he vainly hoped to extinguish in a single conflagration the name and memory of the Paulicians."‡ But, it is the memory of the wicked that shall rot; and the seed of evil doers that shall be cut off. Other leaders appeared. One Paul and his two sons spread the "heresy" in Cappadocia, Phry-

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\* Justinian II. was the son of Constantine IV., surnamed, or nicknamed Pogonatus (πόγων-ωνος, the beard), from the circumstance of his beard's beginning to show itself about the time of his elevation to the throne. His reign began in 685; he was dethroned, and mutilated, and banished by Leontius, one of his generals; who in his turn was dethroned, mutilated, and imprisoned by Ap-simarius Tiberius. After an exile of about ten years, Justinian found means to regain his throne, and rioted in the luxury of tormenting and destroying his enemies for several years. He fell by an assassin, about 611, unlamented, as he had lived unbeloved.

† Schlegel, in Mosheim.

‡ Gibbon.

gia, and Pisidia, being driven from place to place by persecution. "Leo III., the Isaurian\* (A. D. 716—41), harassed them in various ways, and labored to extirpate the sect."† But all such efforts were in vain. After enduring nearly a century and a half of persecution, the Paulicians enjoyed a little respite under the reign of Nicephorus Logotheta (A. D. 802—811); who, though an usurper, and stained with crimes of almost every hue—relaxed the penal laws in favor of this sect, and "gave them free toleration."‡

This reprieve was but short. For Michael I., Curopalates, and Leo IV., the Armenian, the immediate successors of Nicephorus (A. D. 811—820), ordered the Paulicians to be searched out, through all the provinces of the Eastern Empire. *Return to the Church, or die!* were the only alternatives presented to the conscientious dissenter.

This merciless persecution opens a new era in the history of the Paulicians. Hitherto they had labored, and suffered, and died for their faith, and had not, as a body, returned evil for evil, by resisting their persecutors. Like the apostles, their teachers, when persecuted in one place they had fled to another; and thus had spread their principles over nearly the whole of Asia Minor; and when seized by the emissaries of power, and condemned to death, these

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\* So named from a mountainous region of country lying between Cilicia and Phrygia, which was his birth place. From the family of a grazier he ascended to the throne of the Greek Empire.

† Mosheim.

‡ It has been remarked upon by some ecclesiastical historian as a noticeable fact, that during the reign of heathenism the Christians generally suffered the *least* under the worst emperors, and *most* under the best. This may be accounted for in two ways: By the indifference of these infamous men to all religion; or their desire to secure the support of a growing sect.

good men had yielded up their lives without a murmur. But during the progress of this *ten years'* persecution of Michael and Leo, when death, or something worse, was everywhere urged upon these primitive confessors, many of them felt that patience had had its perfect work. Forgetting, in the desperation of their circumstances, the milder precepts of the gospel, some of the sufferers seized their arms, like the Hussites of a later period, and rose in rebellion against the tyranny by which they were trodden under foot. The governor of Pontus and the bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, who were charged with the execution of the imperial edicts, were the first to feel the fury of desperate men. Blood once shed by them, a bold and organized resistance, or the endurance of an indiscriminate slaughter were their only alternatives. They chose the former. Some of them retreated to the recesses of the neighboring mountains,\* and there maintained their independence and their faith. Others retiring within the territories of the Saracens, purchased liberty of conscience and the sweets of revenge by uniting with the enemies of the empire. The efforts of their persecutors gradually ceased, and with them the resistance of the persecuted. Before the expiration of twenty years from the death of Leo, the Paulicians had returned in considerable numbers to their habitations within the Grecian territories; and, so far as appears, with the intention of resuming their former inoffensive and Christian deportment. They were not, however, suffered to remain long unmolested.

Theodora, the regent of the empire during the minority

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\* The Taurus mountains in different ranges, and under various names, intersect Asia from West to East, almost from the Ægean Sea to the Caspian. A long range of them lie not far from Neo-Cæsarea, between the Euphrates and the Black Sea.

of her son Michael III., and sainted by the Greek church as the restorer and defender of image worship—"decreed that the Paulicians should be either exterminated by fire and sword, or brought back to the Greek church."\* Such a decree was in keeping with the character of its authoress; and the execution of it was in no way unworthy of her saintship. Her officers and soldiers commissioned to do this work of blood, discharged their trust in a most cruel manner. These dogs of war explored the cities and villages, and even the mountains of Asia Minor in pursuit of their victims. And so successful were they, that they confiscated the property, and destroyed the lives of about *one hundred thousand Paulicians*. The miserable remnant of this unfortunate people, took refuge from *Christian!* persecution, among the followers of the false prophet. Hospitably received by the Mohammedans, the fugitives formed an alliance with these implacable enemies of the empire, and chose for their leader Carbeas, a valiant soldier, once a commander under one of the generals of the East, and the son of a Paulician martyr. The mountains of Taurus became a second time the home of the persecuted disciples of Constantine. Here they fortified a city, and supplied it with provisions and munitions of war, as their dernier resort. Tibrica, or Tephrice became the metropolis of the Paulician mountaineers.† From this strong hold they made incursions upon the surrounding provinces. For more than thirty years, or till near the close of the ninth century,

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\* Mosheim.

† The precise situation of this city, I cannot ascertain. Gibbon says, it was between Siwas and Trebizond; but these are very far apart, according to the best authorities to which I have access. It was, probably, not far from the intersection of the 40th parallels of north latitude and east longitude from Greenwich, that this strong hold among the mountains of the Taurus was erected.

this warfare was carried on with various success, and great severity. Immense numbers perished on either side. So formidable did these enemies at length become, that several provinces of the empire were actually ruined by them ; and the emperor, Michael III., marching to the rescue of his subjects, was defeated, and compelled to flee before "the heretics whom his mother had condemned to the flames." Another emperor, Basil, was obliged to send an envoy to the mountain metropolis, to treat with his rebellious subjects, as with a sovereign people.\*

On the death of Carbeas, Chrysocheir became the leader of the Paulician bands. "In alliance with the Moslems, he boldly penetrated into the heart of Asia ; the troops of the frontier and the palace even, were repeatedly overthrown ; the edicts of persecution were answered by the capture of Nice and Nicomedia, of Ancyra and Ephesus."† Basil trembled upon his throne ; and humbly sued for peace. But, flushed with victory, and beginning now to lust for empire, Chrysocheir spurned the "royal donative of gold, and silver, and silk garments ;" demanding, as the only price of peace, the abdication of the throne of the Eastern Empire. The tables were now completely changed. The question was no longer, Shall the followers of Constantine be tolerated ? but, Shall the emperor of Constantinople retain the throne of his ancestors ? Basil felt that it must be victory or death ; and rousing himself and his troops for the contest, he marched upon the haughty sectaries. God made him the instrument by which the

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\* This envoy was Peter Siculus ; who has given the most particular and correct account of the Paulicians ; though Gibbon represents him as sufficiently prejudiced against these dissenters from the hierarchy.

† Gibbon.

degenerate Paulicians were taught, that he who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword. The army of Chrysocheir was routed ; and though, for a time, in the strong hold of Tibrica, his followers defied the efforts of the emperor's troops, it ultimately fell before his victorious arms ; and the haughty leader of the Paulicians was surprised and slain, and Basil had the desire of his heart, in being permitted to shoot three arrows into the lifeless head of his enemy. His followers, who escaped with life, sued for mercy or fled to the borders of the empire. This defeat was a death blow to the growing power of the Paulicians ; but their independence and their faith, they still maintained.

As early as the middle of the eighth century, some of these "heretics" had found their way from the banks of the Euphrates and the mountains of Armenia to the capital of the empire. It may have been in the ranks of the Isaurian bands, which Constantine V. raised in his "paternal mountains," to deliver his capital from the usurpations of the image worshippers.\*

From Constantinople they spread themselves into Thrace. From thence, they found their way to the Bulgarians, a people living along the Danube, who had then recently been converted to Christianity. This was a favorable soil

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\* Constantine was the sworn enemy of images ; and proceeded as roughly in the overthrow of them, as Theodora afterwards did in the re-establishment of them. In his absence from Constantinople the lovers of images raised a rebellion, seized the capital, and overturned the government. Constantine immediately retired to Isauria, the home of his ancestors, and having raised an army of hardy and faithful soldiers, marched to Constantinople, and regained his throne. In this army the Paulicians would have been very likely to enlist, as they were the most inveterate haters of images.

for the primitive doctrines of the Paulicians ; and here, as in Thrace, they took deep root ; and for eight or nine centuries, if not longer, continued to live and thrive.\* From Bulgaria the Paulicians migrated into Italy and Slavonia ; and thence spread into other parts of Europe.†

In the tenth century the European Paulicians were considerably strengthened by emigrations from their native regions, and by proselytes in Europe. They possessed the city of Philippopolis, at the head of navigation on the Merise, or Hebrus, and held “the keys of Thrace.” A line of their villages and castles extended thence along through Macedonia and Epirus towards the Adriatic. They were a brave and warlike people, and “their voluntary bands were distinguished in the armies of the empire.” These facts illustrate their numbers and importance. Notwithstanding this they were liable to occasional abuse, if not to persecution, from the government and the church.

During the eleventh century they experienced much suffering from the reigning powers. Still they retained their principles and importance. One of the emperors of this century, Alexius Comnenus, adopted a new method of subduing the obstinacy of these heretics. He went in person to their principal city, and spent whole days in disputing with these schismatics. “Not a few,” we are told, “gave up to this august disputant and his associates.” We shall cease to wonder at this, when we learn, that the arguments of the emperor and his suit were supported by the promise of “rich presents, honors, privileges, lands and houses” to those who should be convinced, and retract their errors,

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\* Mosheim says, that “there certainly were some there in the seventeenth century.” But, they are probably degenerate plants from a good stock.

† Mosheim, Cent. X. P. II. Chap. 5.

and return to the bosom of the church ; while to the obstinate, perpetual imprisonment was promised.\*

“As early as the middle of the eleventh century the Paulicians were numerous in Lombardy and Isubria, and especially in Milan ;”† and strolling bands of them were to be found in France, Germany, and other countries, “who by their appearance of sanctity captivated no small number of the common people.”† Their missionaries and teachers seem to have found their way into almost every part of Europe, and made converts wherever they went. In Italy they were called Paterini and Catheri or Gazari (*καθαγοι*) i. e. the pure or puritans. In France they were called Albigenes. Among the names that were given them was that of *Separates*, a name which we shall hear frequently in the progress of this history.

The light of the Inquisitorial fires enable us to trace this interesting sect of dissenters, from the eleventh century down to the dawn of the Lutheran Reformation. And though as a body they had, doubtless, greatly degenerated in principles and morals, yet the rack and the stake bear record that even during the darkest ages, many of the disciples of Constantine were not unworthy of the name of *Paulicians*.

Scattered in every clime, mingling with people of every name—Greeks, and Romans, and Saracens, and barbarians, and the objects of hatred and persecution for a thousand years—it would be strange indeed had they retained perfectly the principles and doctrines of their venerable founder. Still they stand out on the page of history among the most interesting bodies of dissenters from the usurpations, and corruptions, and tyranny of the Greek and Rom-

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\* See Mosheim, Cent. XI. B. III. P. II. Chap. 5.

† Mosheim.



ish churches. And, as their founder, by the light of sacred truth, discovered and proclaimed several of the leading tenets of Congregationalism, the Paulicians deserve a prominent place among the ecclesiastical ancestors of this denomination, to whose history these pages are devoted.

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## CHAPTER V.

### HISTORY OF THE WALDENSES AND ALBIGENSES, A. D. 1100.

No ancient sects—if sects they may be called—have excited more interest, and received more attention than the *Waldenses and Albigenses*; and yet, several important points in their history are very far from being satisfactorily settled. The very heading of this chapter, suggests some of them.—Are the Waldenses and Albigenses the same sect, under different names? or are they independent branches of the primitive church? Did they rise in the twelfth century, or were they of a much earlier origin?

Mr. Gilly, in his learned introduction to the *Memoirs of Felix Neff*, maintains—"that the Italian Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Subalpines of Dauphiné and Provence, and the Pyrenean Waldenses, were all independent of each other, and remains or branches of the primitive churches in those parts."\*

The Catholic bishop Bossuet, in his "*Variations des Eglises Protestantes*," maintains—and Mr. Waddington thinks successfully†—that the Albigenses "held many opinions

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\* Introduction, particularly, p. 38.

† Hist. of the Church, Harper's Ed. pp. 552, 553.

which are condemned by all protestants.” “Respecting the Vaudois” [or Waldenses], the same author says, “he shows the great uncertainty, perhaps the entire vanity, of their claims to a separate descent from the ante-Nicene Church” \* —or the primitive church.

Milner seems to have regarded the Albigenses as “a branch of the Waldenses ;” † and “the proper founder of them, Claudius of Turin, the Christian hero of the *ninth* century.” ‡

Mosheim—upon most topics in ecclesiastical history, a standard authority—attributes the origin of the Waldenses to the labors of Peter Waldo, or Waldus, or Valdo, in the twelfth century ; and declares, that “those who assign a different origin to the Waldensians \* \* have no authorities for their opinions, and are refuted by all the historians.” § He admits, however, that “long before these times [i. e. twelfth century] there had been resident in the vallies of Piedmont, persons who rejected the prevailing opinions of the Romish church, and who agreed in many things with the Waldensians.” ||

The Albigenses he treats as a branch of the great Paulician family ; and supposes the name given to them in France was derived from the circumstance that they were first condemned by a council which sat at *Albi*, or Albigea, a town of Aquitain, or Aquitania, the name anciently given to the south western part of France. ¶

Gibbon takes substantially the same view of the Albigois : —he speaks of them as identical with the Paulicians. \*\*

\* Hist. of the Church, pp. 552, 553. † Cent. XIII. Chap. 3.

‡ Cent. XIII. Chap. 1. § Book III. Cent. XII. P. II. Chap. 5.

|| Cent. XI. P. II. Chap. 5.

¶ The name Albigenses seems to have been a common title given to heretics of all descriptions in France, at one period.

\*\* Decline and Fall, Vol. IV. Chap. 54.

Mr. Jones, in his valuable history of the Waldenses, while he shows conclusively, as it seems to me, their very high antiquity, treats the Albigois or Albigenses as but another name for the Waldenses.

To this list of writers might be added the names of Beza, and Milton, and Moreland, and Allix, and Andrew Fuller, all of whom maintain, that the Waldenses were of primitive, if not of apostolic origin. And, on the other side, Perrin, a French Protestant who has written the history of the Waldenses, seems to concede, that they originated in the twelfth century under the preaching of Peter Waldo of Lyons.

To the controverted points already mentioned, may be added others, as—Were they anciently what they now are? Were they tinctured with Manichaean errors? Did they maintain or reject infant baptism? And, what is more to our present purpose, Were they, in the order of their churches, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or neither?

Mr. Waddington says: "They maintained and imitated the divine institution of the three orders in the priesthood."\*

Dr. Miller, in his "Letters to Presbyterians," asserts, that they were *anti*-episcopal, and substantially Presbyterian in their church government.

Amidst this conflict of opinions a person will find strong inducements to act the part of an eclectic, and choose from all parties what seems most probable; or, Manichaean-like, attempt a reconciliation of these conflicting statements: and, if one should even venture an independent opinion—when the Rabbins so disagree—he could hardly be chargeable with presumption.

The latter course, after examining all the authorities upon this subject within my reach—and they are more nume-

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\* Hist. of the Cbh. Harper's Ed. p. 291.

rous than upon any topic on which I have yet touched—I have ventured to adopt ; though not to the exclusion of the other two courses suggested above. The view which, on the whole, is most satisfactory to my own mind, is substantially this : The Waldenses or Vaudois, and the Albigenes or Albigois, who were discovered in the twelfth century among the vallies of the Alps and Pyrenees, were not so much independent branches of the apostolic church, as the collected remnants of several sects which had been persecuted unto death in different ages, by the Greek and Romish churches. Many of these sectaries would wander from country to country, seeking rest ; and wherever they could find an asylum from intolerance and persecution, there would they stop ; that would become their pilgrim-home. Such a resting place being discovered by one or more of these Christian wanderers, others would be informed immediately of the safe retreat, and thither resort. Thus their numbers would be increased. The places most likely to furnish rest to these sufferers for conscience sake, would be retired and mountainous sections of country—the least known and the least accessible to the busy world. Here they might live, and multiply, and extend their faith, for a long period, without exciting much interest or notice from the great men of the Church or the State. It deserves notice, that in just such places the Waldenses and Albigenes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were chiefly found. Such countries were Savoy and Piedmont (now known as Sardinia), so famed for *heretics*. These territories were embosomed in the lofty Alps ; diversified with hill and dale, and divided by deep-cut vallies ; which, though opening into fruitful slopes within, were fortified by the God of the hills, and rendered well nigh inaccessible to any but practised feet. In these vallies, and along the foot of these

towering mountains,\* and up their verdant sides, multitudes of devout persons were discovered by the vigilance of the Romish persecutors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The same general description will answer for the countries of Dauphine, and Provence, for the French and Spanish sides of the Pyrenees, and for Bohemia—all of which places were noted in the annals of the Inquisition for harboring *heretics* from the Romish faith.

Now, my theory is this : To some of these secluded spots a few of the devout dissenters of early times found their way, and commenced settlements. Thither may have fled, first of all, some of the earliest of all dissenters—the followers of Novatian ; with these, some remnants of the Donatists may afterwards have found a home ; the Luciferians, and Ærians, and Paulicians and other sufferers may have followed, in smaller or larger numbers, at different periods. The very impulse which would direct the steps of one of these sects, to a land of toleration, or to the protection of the mountains, would lead them *all* thither. I mean not, of course, to the *same* country, or the same mountains ; but to such as were nearest to them. Those first established in their new homes would welcome the persecuted of all sects who should flee to them from Catholic violence. These bleeding remnants of different bodies, though disagreeing somewhat in other respects, would all agree in their hearty hatred of the corrupt hierarchies which had driven them out from the home of their fathers and the land of their nativity.

These persecuted Christians, drawn together by common sympathy, at different periods of time, and from dif-

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\* The name of *Piedmont* is composed of two Latin words, which signify foot of the mountains, viz.—pede *foot*, and montium *of the mountains*.

ferent sections of country, and with religious sentiments varying in some particulars, would unavoidably modify each other's peculiar tenets ; and by mutual compromise would meet on common ground in respect to the circumstantialia of their religious belief. These little communities, scattered among the mountains, or wherever security from persecution might draw them, would thus present to a stranger, points of strong resemblance, which would secure for them a common name. At the same time, there would be, in reality, considerable dissimilarity between them, produced by the preponderance of numbers or influence, in favor of certain distinctive peculiarities, in given cases, which would be discovered only by a familiar acquaintance with these several dissenting bodies.

Thus, when certain persons were discovered by the inquisitors who agreed in leading points, such as—their regard for the Scriptures—their abhorrence of the idolatry and tyranny of the hierarchy—their love for the simple, experimental truths of the gospel, which their fathers and themselves had learned by the operations of the Divine Spirit upon their hearts :—when, I say, persons were found agreeing with each other in their opposition to Romanism on these points, their persecutors would naturally conclude, that they were one and the same sect,—however remotely situated from each other,—and consequently, they would describe them as the same sect, with some points of variance. In this way we may account for the different descriptions of the Albigenses and Waldenses, given to us by their persecutors. Congregations called by these names, being discovered in different sections of country, may have differed from each other in several minor points ;—yea, they may have been, in reality, the remains of different sects ; and yet they were so much alike as easily to be

confounded together. In this way we may account for all the different faces which these dissenters from Romanism are said to have presented to their inquisitorial visitors and murderers.

Some of these sufferers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are accused of Manichæan errors. So were the Paulicians of a much earlier date. These latter, we know fled to the mountains of Asia for protection: And when they migrated to Europe, as early as the ninth century, their strong hold for some time, was around the eastern extremity of that range of mountains which proved the resting place of multitudes of persecuted Christians in later times. This range begins near the western borders of the Black sea, runs across Turkey in Europe towards the Gulf of Venice, and along the entire length of the Gulf through Austria, to the borders of Switzerland; and forming the boundary line between that country and Italy, and between the latter and France, it then turns towards the south-east, and runs the whole length of Italy towards the shores of the Mediterranean sea. From the point where these mountains turn south-eastward, towards the centre of Italy, the distance is not great to another range, which runs down through France, in a south-west direction towards Spain; and forming the boundary between the two kingdoms, runs along near the northern borders of Spain towards the Atlantic, on the west.

I have been thus particular in the description of this range of mountains, because these were the high places *in* which, or *near* which most of the Waldenses and Albigenses were ultimately found.

Now, we may reasonably suppose that, among some of these mountain recesses, many of the persecuted Paulicians lived; and mingling with other sufferers for conscience

sake, imparted a Paulician character to the little communities, more or less distinct according to their numbers and weight of influence. Wherever their numbers or influence was superior to others, with whom they might be associated, their peculiar tenets would stand forth prominently.

In another Alpine recess, the disciples of Claude of Turin might predominate; they, perhaps, would be more inclined to maintain the Episcopal order, which they had associated with the excellencies of their godly bishop of Turin.

Among a third company of these Christian refugees, the disciples of Berengarius may have been most numerous or influential: these, following the opinion of their admired master, with the rejection of the doctrine of the real presence of the identical body of Christ in the sacramental elements, rejected also the doctrine of infant baptism; their opinions prevailing, would give a distinctive character to the little community in which they lived.

In another community the Paterines may have been most numerous; this sect seem to have entertained views of church order which savored of what we now call Congregationalism.—As, for example, that “A Christian church ought to consist of only good people”—that “a Church had no power to frame any constitutions”—that “the sacraments and orders and ceremonies of the church of Rome were futile, expensive, oppressive and wicked,” etc. This sect seem to have recognized no other church officers than such as are consistent with the Congregational doctrine upon this subject. Now, wherever these worthy people predominated, they would give a character to their communities somewhat different from the others.

The sects to which reference has now been made appeared, and spread, and were persecuted, before the close



of the twelfth century ; which is the time when the followers of Waldo, and the Albigenses were persecuted unto death.

In this way, then, I am able to reconcile much of the conflicting testimony respecting these interesting Christians whose history and peculiarities we are presently to consider.

I have most unexpectedly run into a long digression from the main business of these pages—the exhibition of the history of Congregational sentiments upon church order and government ; I hope it will not be considered a useless one. I leave my little theory to go for what it is worth. A better acquaintance with church history might convince me of the futility of it ; it might confirm my belief of it.

*Dissenters between the seventh and twelfth Centuries.*

The reader of ecclesiastical history will not fail to remark, that, from the rise of the Paulicians in the seventh century, to the commencement of the persecutions against the Waldenses and Albigenses, in the twelfth century,—there is a continual succession of dissenters from the hierarchies of Greece and Rome. Many of these dissenters were devout persons, who professed a reverential regard for the word of God, and who kept themselves from the prevailing impurities of the times in which they lived. These persons were variously styled—Paulicians, Cathari, Puritani, Paterini, Publicani, Bulgarians, Josephists, Petrobrusians, Henricians, and more lately, Waldenses, and Albigenses—names derived from their habits, as Cathari, from *καθαροί*, (*katharoi*) *pure ones* ; or from their residences, as Bulgarians, from Bulgaria, where they were

supposed to have originated; or from distinguished leaders among them, as Henricians, from Henry.

I do not suppose that all these were but one sect, or that they perfectly agreed in sentiment; still they were all dissenters from the hierarchies of their day, and many of them, if not most of them, maintained tenets which entitle them to honorable notice in these pages. But, as the materials for a sketch of these sects are very imperfect, I select the Waldenses and Albigenses, as embodying the prominent peculiarities of most of those who dissented from the dominant party, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.\*

*Ecclesiastical opinions of the Waldenses and Albigenses.*

They are accused of “a contempt of ecclesiastical power;”† or, in plain English, they denied the right of the pope and the bishops to lord it over God’s heritage.—“They declare themselves to be the apostles’ successors, to have apostolic authority, and the keys of binding and loosing.—They hold that none of the ordinances of the church, which have been introduced since Christ’s ascension, ought to be observed, as being of no value.—The feasts, fasts, orders, blessings, offices of the church, and the like, they utterly reject.—They say, the bishops, clergy, and other religious orders are no better than the Scribes and Pharisees, and other persecutors of the apostles.”

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\* Reinerius Saccho, an Inquisitor, who was familiar with the opinions of the Waldenses, accuses them of “*mixing the erroneous doctrines of the heretics of old with their own inventions.*”

† I quote the words of R. Saccho, who after having been connected, in different ways, with the Waldenses for seventeen years, apostatized, and became an inquisitor, and a bitter persecutor of these good men. I am indebted to Mr. Jones’s valuable history of the Waldenses, for many of the statements in this article—London, 5th ed. 8vo. p. 520.

In addition to the above peculiarities, Reinerius accuses them of rejecting the Old Testament, "that they may not be overthrown by it; pretending that upon the introduction of the gospel dispensation all old things were to be laid aside."

Such is the testimony of this inquisitor, to the ecclesiastical peculiarities of these persecuted Christians, known by various local names, who dwelt in and around the Alps and Pyrenees, about the middle of the thirteenth century.

I have omitted the larger part of his charges, because they have no relation to the subject in hand. I may say in a word, however, that Reinerius charges upon these dissenters very little that any Protestant would object to, as a part of his own creed.\*

The account given us by another inquisitor,—who says, "he had exact knowledge of the Waldenses,"—of another branch of this family, which appeared in Bohemia in the fourteenth century, will afford some further light upon their ecclesiastical peculiarities. He tells us, that they maintained "That our obedience is due unto God alone, and not to prelates; which they found on Acts 4: 9.—That none in the church ought to be greater than their brethren; according to Matt. 20: 25.—That no man ought to kneel to a priest, because the angel said to John (Rev. 19: 10) 'See thou do it not.'—That tithes ought not to be given to the priests, because there was no use of them in the primitive church.—They reject all the titles of prelates, as pope, bishop, etc.—They condemn all ecclesiastical offices, and the privileges and immunities of the church, and all persons and things belonging to it; such as councils and sy-

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\* For the entire account, see Allix's *Remarks upon the churches of Piedmont*, pp. 188—191. Or Jones's *Hist. of the Chris. Church*, Vol. II. pp. 21—27. 5th ed. London.

nods, parochial rights, etc.—They hold the sacrament of different orders of the clergy to be of no use ; every good layman being a priest, and the apostles themselves being all laymen.—That the priestly vestments, altar, ornaments, pall, corporals, chalices, patins, and other vessels, are of no efficacy.\*—That the holidays of saints are to be rejected ; and that there is no merit in observing the fasts instituted by the church.—Whatsoever is preached without Scripture proof, they account no better than fables.—They despise the decretals, and sayings, and expositions of holy men, and cleave only to the text of Scripture.—They never read the liturgy.—They condemn all approved ecclesiastical customs, which they do not read of in the gospel ; such as the observation of Candlemas, Palm-Sunday," etc.†

This is the testimony of an enemy ; and yet, it is by no means discreditable to those of whom he speaks. His testimony agrees, in nearly every particular, with that of Reinerius, upon the points already referred to. It is, however, worthy of remark, that this last inquisitor clearly refutes the charge of his brother inquisitor, respecting their rejection of the Old Testament. He mentions several opinions, which he says, *they sustained by quotations from the Old Testament*. This shows conclusively, that the Bohemian Waldenses did not reject that portion of God's word. Indeed, this author tells us : "*They can say a great part of the Old and New Testaments by heart.*"

A Catholic bishop of the fifteenth century, who lived in the immediate neighborhood of the Waldenses of Piedmont—

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\* A *Pall*, was the consecrated mantle of an archbishop, sent from Rome. A *Corporal*, was the sacred cloth used to cover the elements, etc., of the eucharist. A *Chalice*, was a sacramental vessel. A *Patin*, was the plate which contained the consecrated bread.

† Jones's Hist. Waldenses, pp. 31—38.

*Seisselius*, of Turin—bears almost precisely the same testimony to the peculiarities of the Christians of those vallies, as that which we have just heard respecting the Bohemian Waldenses. He says distinctly: “They receive only what is written in the Old and New Testaments.\*

Thus do their very enemies testify to the Protestant and Congregational principles and doctrines of the persecuted Waldenses.

In addition to the testimony of the enemies of the Waldenses, we have two or three of their ancient Confessions of Faith; which have been preserved for centuries, among these mountain Christians. In one of them, the substance of which is given by the Magdeburg Centuriators, they assert, That

1. “In articles of faith, the authority of the Holy Scriptures is the highest; and for that reason it is the standard of judging; so that whatsoever doth not agree with the word of God, is deservedly to be rejected and avoided.

2. The decrees of fathers and councils are [only] so far to be approved as they agree with the word of God.

3. The reading and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, is open to, and is necessary for all men,—the laity as well as the clergy; and moreover, the writings of the prophets and apostles are to be read rather than the comments of men.

4. The sacraments of the church of Christ are two, baptism and the Lord’s supper; and in the latter, Christ has instituted the receiving in both kinds, both for priests and people.

5. Masses are impious; and it is madness to say masses for the dead.

6. Purgatory is the invention of men; for they who be-

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\* Jones, pp. 38—45.

lieve, go into eternal life ; they who believe not, into eternal damnation.

7. The invoking and worshipping of dead saints is idolatry.

8. The church of Rome is the Whore of Babylon.

9. We must not obey the pope and bishops, because they are the wolves of the church of Christ.

10. The pope hath not the primacy over all the churches of Christ ; neither hath he the power of both swords.

11. That is the church of Christ, which bears the pure doctrine of Christ, and observes the ordinances instituted by him, in whatsoever place it exists.

12. Vows of celibacy are the inventions of men, and productive of uncleanness.

13. So many orders [of the clergy, are] so many marks of the beast.

14. Monkery is a filthy carcase.

15. So many superstitious dedications of churches, commemorations of the dead, benedictions of creatures, pilgrimages, so many forced fastings, so many superfluous festivals, those perpetual bellowings [alluding to the practice of chanting] and the observations of various other ceremonies, manifestly obstructing the teaching and learning of the word, are *diabolical inventions*.

16. The marriage of priests is both lawful and necessary.”\*

Such appears to have been the faith of the Waldenses, in the twelfth century. I have given the Centuriator’s abridgement entire, because it contains the substance of the other Waldensian creeds which have come down to us ; and presents a correct view of these Alpine Christians.

These sentiments—if we may believe one who had apostatized from the faith and became its bitter persecutor (Rei-

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\* Jones, pp. 47—49.

nerius Saccho)—were embraced by vast multitudes of persons before the middle of the thirteenth century ; for, says he, “ There is scarcely a country to be found in which this heresy is not planted.” Their doctrines were propagated with great assiduity by all who embraced them. Reinerius tells us that one method adopted by them was, to travel up and down the country as pedlers of jewelry, and trinkets, and needle-work, and handkerchiefs. Having gained access to a family, and disposed of some of their wares, they would tell the inmates of more valuable matters ; they would then repeat portions of the word of God, and inform the listening family that by this “ he communicates his mind to men, and inflames their hearts with love to him.”

Not to weary the reader with further particulars, of what we have learned respecting the Waldenses and Albigenses, this is the sum : Between the ninth and thirteenth centuries there appeared in different parts of Europe, numerous bodies of dissenters from the Catholic hierarchy, who, though known by various names, and differing in minor particulars, yet agreed pretty generally in the following points : 1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are an infallible and sufficient guide to the church of Christ ; and that men are under no obligations to believe or practice, as a religious duty, anything not enjoined by the Scriptures. 2. That these teach, that the church of Christ should consist of such only as hear and obey the truth. 3. That Christ has given his church no authority to make laws for the government of his people, but simply requires them to administer such as he has given in his word. 4. That the whole hierarchal system of church government then existing in the world, was anti-Christian ; since the Scriptures nowhere recognized the different orders of the clergy, or the right of the pope, and his bishops, and priests, and other

officers to rule over the people of God. 5. They seem to have recognized no other church officers but bishops or elders, and deacons.\* 6. These appear to have been elected by the brethren;† and their bishops, at least, ordained by the imposition of the hands of others in office.‡ 7. Their churches were composed of persons “previously confessing and declaring [their] faith and change of life.”

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\* I have already noticed Mr. Waddington's assertion—that they recognized *three* orders in the clergy. I will not deny that a community of these good men *may* have been found, who retained this innovation upon apostolical simplicity; but I have not yet met with any evidence of it, and their enemies seem distinctly to assert the contrary; and their own writers declare that, “*they admit of no other degrees than bishops and deacons.*” This is asserted by Vignaux, who, for forty years, was pastor of one of the Waldensian churches in the vallies of Piedmont.—See Jones, pp. 84, 85, 149.

Dr. Clarke, in his *Martyrology*, says, that among the opinions for which the Waldenses were “so declaimed against and cruelly persecuted by the Romanists, were these: “That there is no difference between a bishop and a minister.—That it is not the dignity, but deserts of a presbyter, that makes him a better man.”—Chap. 22, folio ed.

Dr. Miller thinks there is evidence of their having the office of *ruling elder* among them. This, however, would not necessarily affect the assertion in the text.

† An ancient manuscript preserved among the Waldenses, relating to ecclesiastical discipline, claims for the people, the right to choose their own church officers, as a privilege which God has conferred upon his people—“According to the diversity of the work, in the unity of Christ, and conformably to the apostolic example,—‘For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed.’” And these men, “having good testimonials and being well approved of, are received with imposition of hands.”—Gilly's *Waldensian Researches*, p. 143, quoted by Le Bas. *Introduction to the Life of Wickliffe*, p. 54.

‡ Jones, p. 69.



These were the prominent principles and doctrines of the Waldenses and Albigenses, which related to the order, and government, and worship of their churches ; and which seem to authorize an enrolment of their names among the ecclesiastical ancestors of modern Congregationalists.

These sentiments, connected with a faith and morality equally pure and scriptural, spread over almost all parts of the continent of Europe ;\* and found their way even into England ;† preparing the ground, if not sowing the seeds for the harvest of later days.

It was not to be expected that these scriptural Christians should escape the hand of persecution. The story of their sufferings has been so often told, and may be so easily known to all who have access to even a good Sabbath School library, that I need not dwell upon particulars. The decrees of councils, the efforts of bishops, the bulls of popes,‡ the rack and fires of the Inquisition, the armies of the crusaders cheered on with the war cry—" *Persecute*

\* "Cesarius saith : That this heresy so increased, that in a short time it infected—*usque ad mille civitates*—a thousand cities."—Clarke, p. 37.

† Clarke tells us that, "Anno Christi, 1160, some of them came into England, and at Oxford were punished in the most barbarous and cruel manner."—Martyrology, folio, p. 36.

‡ Pope Alexander III. (A. D. 1160—1163) doomed these unfortunate Christians to utter extirpation : " Giving them over to Satan ; interdicting them all communion and society with others ; \* \* confiscating their goods, disinheriting their heirs ; \* \* ordering their houses to be razed to the ground, and their lands to be given to others ; \* \* commanding kings, princes, magistrates, councils, and people, to make an exact inquisition, to shut the gates, to ring the toll-bell ; to arm themselves, to apprehend, kill, or use any other violence to them ; giving their accusers a third part of their estates ; condemning all favorers to the same punishment."—Clarke's Martyrology, Chap. 22.

*them with a strong hand !*"\*—swept hundreds of thousands of these excellent people and their defenders, from the plains and vallies of Europe, and filled the very caves of the mountains with their lifeless bodies. "Yet notwithstanding all the cruelties used against them, their enemies could never prevail to a total extirpation of them, but they still lay hid like sparkles under the ashes, desiring and longing to see that, which now through God's grace, their posterity do enjoy, viz. : The liberty to call upon God in purity of conscience, without being enforced to any superstition and idolatry ; and so instructing their children in the service of God, the Lord was pleased to preserve a church amongst them, in the midst of the Romish corruptions, as a diamond in a dunghill, as wheat amongst chaff, as gold in the fire ; till it pleased God to disperse the gospel in a more general and public way, by the ministry of Luther, and his associates and fellow-laborers in the Lord : At which time, these Albigenses received with greediness the doctrine of the gospel, and so became more eminent in their profession of piety than they were formerly."†

The beautiful and well known sonnet of Milton, written between 1655—1658, and worthy alike of the poet and the Christian, shall close my account of the Waldenses and Albigenses.

*" On the late Massacre in Piedmont."*

" Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worship'd stocks and stones,

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\* The words of pope Innocent III. in his exhortation to the crusaders against the Albigenses.

† Clarke's Martyrology, Chap. 25.

Forget not ; in thy book record their groans  
 Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd  
 Mother with infant down the rocks.\* Their moans  
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
 To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow  
 O'er all the Italian fields where still doth sway  
 The tripled tyrant ; that from these may grow  
 A hundred fold, who, having learn'd thy way,  
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

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## CHAPTER VI.

HISTORICAL VIEW OF GREAT BRITAIN, B. C. 55, TO A. D. 1350.

BRITAIN, is a name dear to every Congregationalist. It was upon the soil of Britain that the principles which he loves were first fully restored to the Church of Christ, after an oblivion of a thousand years. It was in this island, regarded by the ancients as "the ends of the earth," that those great and good men arose, who shone as lights in the world ; and became the guides of inquiring thousands, to the simple and apostolic doctrines respecting the faith, and order, and worship of the Christian Church.

As Great Britain is to be the field of our investigation for a considerable time, and as our whole denominational his-

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\* "A mother was hurled down a mighty rock, with a little infant in her arms ; and three days after was found dead, with the little child alive, but fast clasped between the arms of the dead mother, which were cold and stiff, insomuch that those who found them had much ado to get the young child out."—Moreland's *Hist. of the Chhs. of Piedmont*, quoted by Jones, Vol. II. p. 354.

tory is intimately associated with the church history of Britain, it will not be deemed an inappropriate introduction to this field, to present a brief outline of her religious history, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the days of John Wickliffe.

The most ancient names of this island were *Briton*, *Albion*, or *Albin*. Its very early history contains so much that is fabulous, that it is difficult to distinguish between truth and falshood. Hume rejects "all traditions, or rather tales, concerning the more early history of Britain;" and begins his history with the invasion of Julius Caesar. Sharon Turner, on the contrary, "insists, that sufficient attention has not been paid to them by his predecessors." Milton seems to have regarded these ancient fables and traditions as containing "footsteps and reliques" worth noticing. It seems most probable, that the island was known to the Phoenicians, those ancient navigators, some centuries before the Roman invasion.

In the year 55 or 56 before Christ, Julius Caesar, having overrun Gaul with his victorious legions, turned his eyes towards the neighboring island of Briton. Influenced, probably, more by love of conquest than anything else, he effected a landing on the island, and made some attempts towards conquering the ferocious inhabitants. But, so determined was their resistance, that the Roman conqueror seems at first to have done little else than to establish a temporary and precarious footing upon their shores; and finally, but half conquered the barbarous people. The complete conquest of Briton was not accomplished until nearly a century and a half after the attempt of Caesar, by the celebrated Cneius Julius Agricola, A. D. 84. And this, according to Gibbon: "After a war of about forty years."

The inhabitants of this island, when visited by the Ro-

mans, appear to have consisted of two races ; the Belgic, inhabiting the south-eastern part, and the Celtic, who had been driven into the interior. The former of these, had made so much progress toward civilization as to have become, to some extent, an agricultural people. The latter were more fierce, barbarous, and ferocious ; dwelling in temporary huts in the woods, clad in skins, if covered at all, and depending chiefly upon their flocks and the wild game of the forests for their living. They were broken up into numerous independent tribes, without any common bond of union among themselves, except what their common faith furnished.

### *Druidism of the Britons.*

Their religion was of the most despotic character. Their priests, who were called *Druids*, not only superintended the offering of sacrifices—which, on great occasions were sometimes human—but they engrossed the entire business of instructing the youth ; they were the physicians of the island ; the arbiters in all disputes between states, as well as individuals ; no public business could be transacted without their authority ; they claimed judicial power, in criminal, as well as civil cases ; were exempt from the burdens of war and taxation—in a word, were the *sovereigns* of the Britons. To enforce their decrees, the druids had the power to excommunicate any offender from public worship, to debar him from any intercourse with his fellow-citizens in any of the affairs of life, to refuse him protection from violence of any kind, and thus to render life an insupportable burden ; or, they could absolve one from all guilt, and thus free him from all punishment. At the head of these mighty priests was an *Arch-Druid*, who was *their*

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sovereign, and ruled them as absolutely as they ruled the nation.

Their worship was in the open air; and usually, if not uniformly, under the shade of the oak; which they are said to have worshipped as the symbol of the Supreme Being himself, or the place of his special residence. From these circumstances, the priests and their worship are supposed, by some antiquaries, to have derived their name—*Druids*—*Druidism*, from  $\delta\rho\tilde{\upsilon}\varsigma$  (*druse*) an oak. They are supposed to have believed in the immortality of the soul, and its transmigration after death. They used no books in their instructions. All their religious and scientific knowledge; all that they taught of history, or of the deeds of their ancestors, was oral, and much of it in verse: these their pupils were required to commit to memory, but were forbidden to write down.

The better to accomplish their purposes, the Druids carried their pupils into distant and desolate regions, and there instructed them, from day to day, in lonely caves. Their course of instruction seems not to have been finished until 24,000 verses, containing divers kinds of knowledge, were committed to memory.

Never were a people so completely controlled and enslaved by their religious rites, and religious teachers, as were the ancient Britons. After the conquest of the island, the Romans, finding it impossible to govern the people while their religious superstitions were tolerated, were compelled—contrary to their usual policy—to abolish Druidism by penal statutes.

*Briton a Roman Province, A. D. 84—448.*

It was among this people, that Roman colonies were settled, Roman laws, and manners, and customs, and learning,

were introduced ;—and above all, *that religion*, which ultimately became the *faith* of the Romans.

The precise time when Christianity was introduced into this island is uncertain. It is equally doubtful by whom. It seems quite probable that it entered from Gaul ; and not later than the third century. It may have been received at an earlier period—even from apostolic lips. It is well established that there were three British bishops at the council of Arles in the year 314 ; an indication that Christianity had made considerable progress in the island at that time.

The Romans, after being masters of Briton for about four centuries, were obliged to abandon this province to the care of its own inhabitants, somewhere about the middle of the fifth century.\* In the mean time, considerable progress in civilization had been made. Nearly one hundred cities and towns had arisen ;† and the arts and learning of the Romans had made some progress among these provincials.

Intermarriages, too, had softened the *hauteur* of the conquerors, and the prejudice of the conquered.

Christianity too, had exerted some influence in reforming the manners, if not in changing the hearts of the Britons. Gibbon supposes that, when the Roman emperor ceased to exercise sovereignty over the island, (about A. D. 450,) “ the British church might be composed of thirty or forty bishops, with an adequate proportion of the inferior cler-

\* Authorities vary. Hume places it A. D. 448. The Edin. Encyclopaedia A. D. 421. Gibbon seems to carry it up to A. D. 409. This difference is occasioned chiefly by the question, whether the first withdrawal of the Roman legions from Briton, was an abandonment of the island.

† Gibbon says : “ Ninety-two considerable towns had arisen \* \* and among them, thirty-three were distinguished above the rest, by their superior privileges and importance.”—Vol. II. p. 279. Other writers make the number somewhat less.

gy.”\* And from the circumstance that they were rather distinguished for their poverty than their wealth, we may infer, that they retained a respectable character for christian activity and piety.†

Such, substantially, appears to have been the state of Briton when the weakness, and approaching dissolution of the Roman empire, compelled the imperial government to withdraw the legions, which had heretofore been the principal defence of the island.

### *Invasion of the Scots and Picts.*

Immediately on the removal of these troops, the Scots and Picts—the highlanders and lowlanders of Scotland—broke in upon the Britons “like hungry wolves into a sheepfold.”‡ The northern walls, which the Roman generals had erected and fortified for the protection of the provincial islanders, presented but a feeble barrier to the inroads of these fierce barbarians. They desolated with fire and sword

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\* Vol. II. Chap. 31. p. 280. See also, Bingham's Ecc. Antiquities, Vol. I. B. IX. Chap. 6. p. 394.

† Of three British bishops who attended the council of Rimini, A. D. 359, it is said: “tam pauperes fuisse ut nihil haberent,” i. e. they were so poor that they had absolutely nothing:—See Gibbon, as above. If they were proportionally poor in spirit, they were, doubtless, laborious and faithful ministers. Of this, however, there is so much room for doubt, as to forbid us to speak confidently.

‡ Gildas, quoted in the London Encyclopaedia, Art. Britain. Gildas was a monk, born in Wales, A. D. 511. He wrote a history of Britain, valuable for its antiquity, and the information which it contains of his own times. “He is the only British author of the sixth century whose works are printed.—Lon. Ency. Art. Gildas,



considerable portions of the island ; they took possession of the frontier towns ; and finally overran the country. The inhabitants were massacred, driven out, or conquered. After a season of oppression, the Britains rose upon their conquerors ; cut in pieces great numbers of them, and drove back the remainder into Scotland. A short season of peace and prosperity followed—and, if we may credit Gildas of “ corruption of manners among all ranks,” not excepting the clergy themselves. The good monk complains bitterly, that those “ who should have reclaimed the laity by their example, proved the ringleaders in every vice ; being addicted to drunkenness, contention, envy,” etc. The false security, which this state of things implies, was soon broken up by the return of the Scots and Picts in greater numbers than before ; and the evils which they inflicted on this unhappy people, were proportionally terrible.

While suffering the ravages of these barbarians, the miserable Britons sought an alliance with the *Saxons*. This seems to have been the common name of several tribes of Northmen, who inhabited the northern parts of Germany, along the Baltic Sea, and the eastern shores of the North Sea. Their inhospitable climate, the barrenness of the soil, and their maritime situation, had enticed them into the roving habits and lawless lives of freebooters. They were the pirates of Europe. In their light boats, framed of wicker, and covered with hides, they coasted along the shores of the sea, plundering the coasts, or ascending rivers and creeks, as the hope of gain directed. In this way, they acquired a predatory acquaintance with ancient Gaul ; and ultimately found their way across the narrow strait which separated Gaul from Briton.

It was, probably, the experience of the hardihood and bravery of the Saxons, in their piratical attacks upon the

island coast, which led the suffering Britons to propose an alliance with them, in order to expel the barbarous Scots and Picts. The Saxon leaders readily accepted the proposed alliance. They furnished a band of a thousand six hundred warriors, who, united with the British forces, readily drove the tribes of Scotland to their native fastnesses.

*Saxon Conquest, A. D. 450—600.*

Scarcely had the unsuspecting Britons time to rejoice over the success of their alliance, when they began to find, to their amazement, that they had introduced into their island a more formidable enemy than had just been driven out. The Saxon chiefs, perceiving the weakness and unwarlike character of their allies, the fruitful character of their soil, and the wealth of the island, immediately set their hearts upon the conquest of the country. Establishing themselves upon the small and fertile island of Thanet, on the south-western coast of Briton, they sent to their German friends an account of the country to which they had been introduced; and communicated their purposes of conquest. The hardy, piratical fishermen of the North Sea and the Baltic, eagerly embraced the opportunity of changing their abode, and improving their condition. Under various pretences successive thousands of the Saxons were introduced to the adjacent islands and to the mainland of Briton. Finding, at length, their numbers sufficient, the Saxon leaders sought occasion for quarrelling with the Britons; threw off the mask of friendship, and forming an alliance with the very men whom they had driven out of the country—the Scots and Picts—commenced a war of conquest or extermination upon the unfortunate islanders. Vast

multitudes of them were slaughtered ; their towns and cities were sacked and burned ; and large tracts of country were made desolate. Some of the inhabitants fled across the strait to Holland ; some to Gaul. Others took refuge in the woods and mountains of the interior. The Britons were at length roused by the desperation of their circumstances, and fought heroically for their native land. Rivers of blood enriched the devoted soil. Various success attended the conflicting armies ; yet the invaders, constantly augmented by the swarms from their northern hives, gradually encroached upon the miserable islanders, until the whole of Briton became the prey of the Saxon spoilers. Thus, after a most terrible and desolating contest of nearly 150 years, (i. e. from about A. D. 450 to A. D. 600), the Saxon heptarchy, or seven kingdoms, were established on the territory which is now known as *England*. The original inhabitants were almost totally extirpated. A few of the most daring and successful resistants were driven back into the mountains of Cornwall and Wales ; hence the name—Wales and Welshmen, from the Saxon tongue, denoting a strange country, or a stranger. Among the mountains of Wales, the ancient Britons maintained their independence for more than six centuries.

The Saxon invasion and conquest swept away from the island all traces of former civilization and Christianity, and covered this land, a second time, with the darkness of the harshest paganism. *Woden* or *Odin*, was the supreme god of the Saxons ; from whom several of the heptarchy princes were supposed to have descended. He was a god of war—he slaughtered thousands at a blow. In his palace of Valhalla, he received to supreme felicity the souls of those who fell in battle bravely fighting. Their days were spent in employments most congenial to their tastes

—"in mimic hunting matches, or imaginary combats." Their nights were devoted to feasting upon delicious viands, served by virgins of surpassing beauty, and never fading charms; and in regaling themselves with mead, drunk from the skulls of their slaughtered enemies.\*

A conquest made by the worshippers of such a god, and the expectants of such pleasures, and under the immediate direction of men who claimed affinity to Woden himself—must, of necessity, have been destructive of everything civilizing or humanizing.

*Christianity introduced among the Saxons, about A. D. 596.*

*Gregory the Great* was the father of the Anglo-Saxon† church. That same Gregory who is said to have destroyed the monuments of ancient Roman greatness, lest the visitors of Rome should give more attention to those works of art, than to the pursuits of religion; and who is infamous among the lovers of classical literature, for having burned numerous ancient manuscripts, among which were several of Livy, lest the clergy should be more instructed in the polished productions of pagan Rome, than in the monkish learning of papal Rome. The same, who encouraged the use of pictures and images in the churches, —though he condemned the *worship* of them—as needful helps to the instruction and edification of the ignorant populace. Such was the fountain head from which flowed the Christianity of the Saxon church; not, that Gregory him-

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\* See Art. Mythology, in London Encyc.—also, Hume, Vol. I. Chap. 1. and Russell's Modern Europe, Letter xi.

† This title is sometimes given to the conquerors of Briton, because the *Angles* were a leading tribe among the Saxon conquerors.

self went to Briton—though he would gladly have done so had his duties as pope of Rome allowed him. He, however, was the great patron and promoter of the mission to these reputed barbarians. Augustine, commonly called St. Austin, the chosen leader of the forty monks who were sent on this embassy of proselytism, seems to have been a worthy representative of his sovereign lord the pope.\* Jortin calls him “a sanctified ruffian.” Whether or not he deserves so harsh an appellation, certain it is, that the religion introduced by Austin was little better than that which it superseded. By the order of his sovereign lord the pope, Austin established public worship in the heathen temples, after purifying them with “holy water;” and encouraged the people, on festive occasions, to gather around these temples, to build their booths, and slaughter their cattle, and feast and carouse, as they had been accustomed to do under the reign of Woden. This, and much else of the same general character, his saintship allowed, on the very convenient plea of—adapting the forms of worship, and the order of the church, to the peculiarities of the people among whom it was established. And it will not be easy, I apprehend, for the advocates of this doctrine, to show wherein Gregory, or his vicegerent, acted inconsistently with this convenient doctrine. If we may depart from the apostolic model, in order to accommodate the prejudices of *one* class of people, or to adapt the church to *one* form of civil government, why may we not be equally accommodating to *all*? And who shall say: Thus far shalt thou go, but no further! The truth is—and good men will yet, I believe, come to see it—there is no stopping place, if we go beyond the law and the testimony. If the apostolic churches are not our patterns, we have none. And if we

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\* See Jortin's remarks, quoted by Waddington, p. 134, note.

have none ; every people may consult their own taste and fancy in church architecture.

With a knowledge of Gregory's principles, and Austin's policy, we need not wonder that eight years sufficed to spread Christianity—such as it was—over the kingdom of *Kent*, the eldest of the heptarchy kingdoms. This event was hastened, doubtless, by the circumstance that Ethelbert, the king of Kent, had married Bertha, a christian princess, daughter of the king of Paris ; who, for eighteen years previous to the arrival of Austin, had supported a private chaplain and maintained christian worship at the court. The kingdom of Northumberland followed the example of Kent ; 12,000 persons, we are told, were baptized in a single day. Before the close of the seventh century (about A. D. 686), Christianity had become the religion of all the seven kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons.

The character of the converts may be estimated by the ease with which they were made, the means employed, and by the readiness with which these converts threw off their Christianity and returned to paganism, and put it on again, at the bidding of their king.

A single story shall suffice for an illustration of this whole matter :—*Eadbald*, the son and successor of Ethelbert the first christian monarch of Kent, conceiving a violent passion for his mother-in-law, renounced the christian religion, because it forbade such incestuous marriages ; and, with most of his subjects, returned to the worship of Woden. In this posture of affairs, there was little to encourage the bishops to remain in the kingdom, and two actually left. Laurentius, the primate, was upon the point of giving up all further attempts to *Christianize* the kingdom, when a happy expedient was suggested to his mind :—He appeared one morning before Eadbald, and throwing off

his priestly robes, presented his lacerated body to the astonished king. The monarch immediately demanded who had dared thus to abuse so venerable a person. Laurentius informed him, that no earthly hands had thus wounded him ; but, that *St. Peter* had appeared to him in a vision, and after severely reprimanding him for his intended desertion of the sheep of Christ, had inflicted the blows which he saw, as a punishment for his unfaithfulness. The apostate monarch could resist no longer ; he immediately divorced his wife, and returned to the church. His subjects, as in duty bound, followed his example ; and thus the *Christian religion !* was firmly established in the eldest of the heptarchy kingdoms.\*

Christianity propagated among pagans by men and means such as have now been described, could be little else than a change of superstitions. The history of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, from the arrival of Bertha and her chaplain, in 579, to the end of the heptarchy, in 827,—a period of 248 years—is a confirmation of this reasonable supposition. It would be too much to assert, that there was no intelligent piety in the land ; but, it is perfectly apparent from the history of those times, that Christianity had little else than a name to live while it was dead. Flowing to the Saxons, as it did, from the corrupt fountain-head of papal usurpation, it must have been the water of death, rather than of life, to the ignorant islanders. The church history of the heptarchy is a loathsome story of papal imposition on the one hand, and of ignorant and superstitious devotion on the other hand. Many of the putrescent abominations of Rome were incorporated into the Saxon church. Reverence for their sovereign lord the pope, was the first article of the

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\* See Mosheim, Book II. Cent. VI. Part I. Chap. 1. and Cent. VII. P. 1. c. 1. And Hume, Vol. 1. Chap. 1.

Saxon creed. A devout regard for all that wore the sacerdotal habit, stood next in order. The worship of saints and reliques, was held as scarcely less important than that of God himself. The payment of "Peter's pence," would purchase pardon for a thousand sins. A pilgrimage to Rome, the establishment of a monastery, or the gift of property to the church—would cover the most flagitious crimes. The hoary-headed villain could wash his hands in innocence, quiet the upbraidings of conscience, and smooth his path to hell, by making over to the church the profits of his villainy, and spending his last days within the hallowed walls of a monastery.

*Danish Invasion, A. D. 832.*

This was the state of English Christianity up to the time of the Danish invasion, A. D. 832. Confusion, and war, and pillage, and flames, and blood, attended the successive incursions of the Danish freebooters. The persevering energy and the bravery of Alfred, finally expelled these fierce invaders, or converted them into obedient subjects; and his wisdom restored peace and prosperity to England, after more than half a century of confusion and suffering;—A. D. 893—901.

Alfred is celebrated in English history for his martial valor, the excellent laws and regulations which he established throughout his kingdom, for the encouragement of learning, and finally, for his pious regard for the interests of religion. That there was a call for his fostering care of learning and piety, is but too obvious from the complaint of Alfred himself;—"that on his accession, he knew not one person, south of the Thames, who could so much as interpret the Latin service; and very few in the northern parts who had even reached that pitch of erudition."\*

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\* Hume's England, Vol. I. Chap. 2.



*The Story of Dunstan.*

Half a century had scarcely elapsed from the death of Alfred, before the notorious *Dunstan*, ycleped *saint*, issued from his narrow den, to delude the ignorant with his miracles, and to curse the land with his machinations. Having failed as a courtier, he turned *fakir*. He built him a cell, so low that he could not stand erect in it, and of dimensions so contracted that he had not room to stretch himself. Here he spent his time in devotion and manual labor. But even here—if we may believe his monkish biographers—his saintship was not exempt from company. The devil often visited him, and sorely troubled him. At length coming one day under the form of a beautiful woman, and thrusting his head into the cell of the saint, Dunstan, detecting the fraud, and exasperated beyond further forbearance, seized a pair of red hot pincers—made ready perhaps for the occasion—and caught the fair devil by the nose, and thus held him, in durance vile, while the neighborhood resounded with his bellowings.

This veritable piece of tragi-comic history, being industriously circulated, and unhesitatingly believed, established Dunstan's character as a saint. His reputation soon introduced him to the court of Edmund, and the rich abbey of Glastonbury. In the succeeding reign of Edred (A. D. 946), he became the prime minister of England, the confidential adviser of the king, and the keeper of his conscience. This arrangement facilitated Dunstan's plan for enslaving the kingdom to the sovereign pontiff. For this purpose he introduced into the island a new order of monks—the Benedictines—the very body-guard of the pope. These monks having bound themselves to a life of celibacy, were loud in their denunciations of the regular clergy. The

old clergy of the kingdom, being married men, were bound to the state with a tie not less strong than that which held them in obedience to the Head of the church. The ambitious designs of the popes could not well be attained without an order of men entirely separate from an interest in the state. In the Benedictines this class of men were found ; and it was the policy of the Roman pontiff to employ these men in making the church independent of the throne. In other words—in making the sceptre subservient to the crosier. That Dunstan and his monks did much to accomplish this purpose, is but too apparent from the insolent abuse which Edwy and his beautiful queen suffered at their hands.

This prince, the successor of the superstitious Edred, venturing to marry a princess more nearly allied to him by birth than the canon law allowed, incurred the wrath of his *chaste* ecclesiastics. On the day of his coronation feast, Edwy, having retired from the noisy revellings of his barons, to the apartment of his queen and her mother, was rudely broken in upon by Dunstan and his creature Odo, archbishop of Canterbury. Upbraiding the king for his retirement, Dunstan tore him from his affrighted queen, “ and pushed him back, in a disgraceful manner, into the banquet of the nobles.”\*

The king, though afraid to resist the imperious saint at the time, soon after attempted to revenge this insult by calling Dunstan to account for his administration of the treasury under the previous reign. The haughty minister, refusing to give account of his stewardship, was banished the realm. But the saint ultimately proved too strong for the king. The kingdom was filled with praises of the banished one, and murmurings against his persecutor. And when the

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\* Hume.

public mind was ripe, the infamous Odo ordered the queen to be seized ; and having branded her beautiful face with a hot iron, carried her away captive to Ireland. Edwy, finding it vain to resist, at length submitted to a divorce. In the meantime Elgiva, being healed of her wounds, and regarding herself still as the wife of the king, found means to escape from her exile, and was fleeing to her husband. Odo, being apprised of her movements, intercepted her ; and doomed her to death. “ She was hamstrung ; and expired a few days after, at Gloucester, in the most acute torments.”\* This, however, was not the end of the tragedy. The people were stirred up by the ecclesiastics to rebel against their sovereign. Edwy was driven from his throne, and excommunicated from the church ; and at length died, the object of clerical hatred and persecution. Dunstan was recalled in triumph, loaded with wealth and honors while he lived, and canonized at death.

I have given the story of Dunstan and Edwy as a fair illustration of the state of religion, as a national establishment in England, to the end of the tenth century. And, indeed, with slight additions, it will answer well for the reflector of the English church for another half century.

*Conquest of England, by William, duke of Normandy,  
A. D. 1066.*

THE NORMAN CONQUEST, which was sanctified by the pope, Alexander II, and facilitated by the clergy of England—many of whom were Frenchmen or Normans, introduced by the policy of Dunstan and his coadjutors—was the instrument, in the pope’s hands, of breaking down the spirit of English ecclesiastical independence which had so long been struggling with the papal hydra. Before the

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\* Hume,

close of the eleventh century, England was hardly second to France or Italy in devoted attachment to the see of Rome.

It is true that the Conqueror controlled this growing superstition by the might of his power and the strength of his genius—as he did everything else—so as to make it subserve his own interests. Still the evil grew apace during his reign, and proved too strong for some of his successors.

### *Incroachments of the Pope.*

Towards the close of this century the right of election to church preferments, and investiture in the same, was denied to laymen; and a fierce contest began between the English monarch and his clergy and their sovereign head upon this question. This, and other matters involving the question of the pope's supremacy over kings and princes, as well as over all laymen—continued to distract the kingdom for a long time. Henry I. found it for his interest to flatter the clergy, and not to break with the pope; and yet, he was exceedingly reluctant to yield any of the ancient prerogatives of the crown. The contest was carried on during the greater part of his reign; which ended A. D. 1135. And, though neither party gained a complete victory, yet it was evident on the whole, that the pope and his party made progress towards sovereignty.

Under the usurper Stephen, the successor of Henry I, and during the civil wars which occurred in this reign, the clergy, being indispensable to the success of either party, had opportunity to advance, yet further, towards an entire independence of the crown. And appeals to the pope to settle ecclesiastical controversies, which had not before been tolerated by English monarchs, becoming common during these troublous times, gave his holiness greater power in that kingdom than he had ever before possessed.

*Story of Thomas à Becket.*

The last half of the twelfth century witnessed a spectacle "such as had never before been exhibited to the world ;"\* two crowned heads, Henry II. of England and Lewis of France, on foot, each with his hand upon the rein of the pope's horse, conducting his holiness into the castle of Torci. Such were the honors paid to the *Man of Sin* in that age.

Henry II, nevertheless, was not a man to submit, even to the pope, longer than he perceived it for his interest. Having by the mediation of the pontiff relieved himself from the danger of a war with Lewis, he immediately turned his attention to the state of ecclesiastical affairs in his kingdom. Perceiving that "the usurpations of the clergy had mounted to such a height that the contest between the *regale* and the *pontificale* was really arrived at a crisis in England ;" and that it had become necessary to determine "whether the king or the priests, particularly the archbishop of Canterbury, should be sovereign of the kingdom ;"† Henry resolved to curb the ambition of the clergy ; and to bring the church, as well as the realm, entirely under his control. And he was doubtless the man to do this, if arbitrary power could have accomplished the object. For this purpose he raised to the see of Canterbury his favorite, confidential friend, and chancellor, Thomas à Becket ; a man who well understood the king's plans, and who, heretofore, had been entirely subservient to the monarch's wishes. Becket possessed capacity and learning ; lofty ambition and unshrinking firmness ; and soon showed himself capable of playing the *saint*, as perfectly as he had pre-

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\* Cardinal Baronius, quoted by Hume, Vol. I. Chap. 8.

† Hume, as above.

viously done the *courtier*. The dainty chancellor, whose equipage and style of living had been the admiration of the kingdom, suddenly became another Dunstan. Instead of the narrow cell, lower than a man could stand in, and shorter than one could stretch himself in, Becket resorted to a hair shirt, worn next his skin ; which he changed so seldom that it became extremely filthy, and was filled with vermin. And, instead of wounding the devil's nose with red-hot pincers, he lacerated his own back with frequent flagellations. By his austerities and affected humility he soon became a saint of the highest grade.

In the meantime the archbishop, so far from coöperating with the king in his efforts to curb the clergy, set himself in direct opposition to his master. Henry, as may be supposed, was exasperated to the highest degree to find his chosen instrument of church reform turned against him. And in his wrath he resolved to humble, if not to destroy the prelate. Becket, perceiving his intention, fled in disguise, and took shelter under the wing of the pope. Alexander treated him with distinguished favor ; and soon made Henry feel the strength of the pope's long arm. Though the king struggled manfully to shake off the grasp, he was compelled at length to yield. And so low was the imperious monarch of England reduced, that he condescended to hold the stirrup of the victorious Becket, while he mounted his horse. Though afterwards the peace between the king and his archbishop was broken ; and the arrogance of Becket and the violence of Henry caused the prelate's death ; yet the triumph of the church was finally complete, and the humbled monarch was glad to make his peace with Rome by doing penance at Becket's grave. He was required to go barefoot to the tomb of the martyr ; and after kneeling and praying for some time upon the grave, and

submitting to be scourged by the monks, he was compelled to pass the day and night without refreshment, kneeling upon the naked stone.

The story of Becket may serve to illustrate the relative position of Church and State in England, up to the close of the twelfth century.

*England made a vassal to the Pope.*

It was reserved for *John*, one of the most odious, cowardly, and contemptible creatures that ever filled the English throne, to complete the work of British degradation, and *Innocent III*, pope at that time (1199—1216), was a fit instrument in the hands of the Dragon to carry on the work of infamy.

John began his career by murdering, with his own hands, his innocent nephew Arthur, duke of Brittany. He stabbed him, while the youth was on his knees begging for life. And then, fastening a stone to the body, he threw it into the Seine, as one would the carcase of a beast. John's next step was to apply to the pope to preserve him from the destructive consequences of a war with Philip of France, which his murderous cruelty towards Arthur had excited. Encouraged by the pusillanimity of John, Innocent took occasion from an appeal, soon after made to him to decide between the conflicting claims of three persons who had been elected to the archbishopric of Canterbury, to establish the right of the papal throne to appoint who it would to this high office, the second in the kingdom;—an usurpation upon the rights of the crown which no pope had ever before attempted. John, craven spirited as he was, by this act was inflamed to the highest pitch of resentment, and vented his spite upon the clergy in his kingdom who appeared to countenance the proceedings of the pope. The pope

warned the refractory monarch ; gently reminding him of the story of Thomas à Becket. But finding that John was not inclined to submit, Innocent laid the kingdom under an *interdict*. By this, most of the outward rites of religious worship were suspended ; the altars were stripped of their ornaments ; the *reliques* and images of saints were laid upon the ground and carefully covered up ; the bells were removed from the steeples of the churches ; the dead were buried without religious rites, in common ground, or thrown like cattle, into ditches ; marriages were celebrated in the grave-yards ; meat was denied to all classes ; entertainments and pleasures of all kinds were forbidden ; men were prohibited to pay even a decent regard to their persons, their beards were to go unshorn, and their apparel unchanged ; the ordinary salutations of friends even were condemned. These were some of the terrific consequences of an interdict from the “ Vicar of God.”

John raved and swore at this act of papal impudence. But this did not improve his situation. All the resistance he could make was of no avail. *Excommunication* followed the interdict. The king now began to quail. It was not, however, until the sovereign pontiff had uttered another thunder, by which John was *deposed* from his throne, and his subjects absolved from their allegiance to him, and a powerful French army was prepared to carry out the plans of his holiness— that the English monarch was completely subdued and tamed. He was now ready to make his peace with Rome on any terms. In token of his penitence, and as an evidence of his entire submission to his sovereign lord the pope, John was required to resign his kingdom to St. Peter and St. Paul, to St. Innocent III. and all his holy successors ; “ and abjectly to agree to hold his dominions as a feudatory of Rome.” The legate and



representative of the pope was the person to whom this surrender was made. Having made this submission of all his rights, and honors, and titles, John was next required to do homage to the legate, for the privilege of holding his crown, and administering the government of the kingdom. This he did under the following humiliating circumstances : Unarmed, the monarch entered the room where Pandolfo, the legate, sat upon a throne ; and throwing himself upon his knees, placed his joined hands between those of Pandolfo, and swore fealty to the pope in the following words : “ I John, by the grace of God, king of England, and lord of Ireland, for the expiation of my sins, and out of my own free will, with the advice and consent of my barons, do give unto the church of Rome, and to pope Innocent III. and his successors, the kingdoms of England and Ireland, together with all the rights belonging to them ; and will hold them of the pope, as his vassal. I will be faithful to God, to the church of Rome, to the pope my lord, and to his successors lawfully elected ; and I bind myself to pay him a tribute of one thousand marks of silver yearly ; to wit, seven hundred for the kingdom of England, and three hundred for Ireland.”\*

This humiliating and disgraceful transaction will sufficiently illustrate the enslaved and wretched condition of the kingdom to the end of John’s reign, A. D. 1216.

### *Papal Tyranny at its height.*

The reign of Henry III. was as memorable for papal tyranny and extortion as that of John’s, his immediate predecessor. It was the longest and one of the most grievous reigns that England ever experienced. The kingdom was

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\* Russell’s Modern Europe, Vol. I. Part I. Letter 31 ; Hume, Vol. I. Chap. 11.

filled with foreign monks, chiefly Italians, who possessed themselves of the richest benefices in the land ; the income of which, at one time, during this reign, was estimated at 60,000 marks\*—a sum greater than that of the crown itself. Pluralities and non-residences were notoriously common. “ Mansel, the king’s chaplain is computed to have held, at once, *seven hundred* ecclesiastical livings.”† The policy of the pope during this reign, seems to have been to reap a golden harvest from the usurpations of the preceding reigns. And the worst of it was, that Henry seemed disposed to encourage, rather than to repress these exactions. The legate of the pope is said to have carried out of the kingdom, at one time, more money than he left in it. “ He exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices ; the *twentieth* of all ecclesiastical revenues without exception ; the *third* of such as exceeded a hundred marks a year, and the *half* of such as were possessed by non-residents. He claimed the goods of all intestate clergymen ; he pretended a title to inherit all money gotten by usury ; he levied benevolences upon the people ; and when the king, contrary to his usual practice, prohibited these exactions, he threatened to pronounce against him the same censures which he had emitted against the emperor Frederic ;”‡ who had been excommunicated and deposed, and had died under his troubles. In addition to all these impositions, Innocent exercised the right of setting aside any elections or appointments to ecclesiastical offices. Three archbishops were successively set aside by him ; and it was not until one was elected of his own nomination, that he would confirm the election.

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\* A mark was 13 shillings and 4 pence, which would make the sum equal to £40,000 ; which, considering the value of money in those days, was an enormous sum.

† Hume.

‡ Ibid.

Papal tyranny reached its highest pitch during this reign. The miserable people, ground to the dust by the high-handed robberies of the king and the pope, began at length to show signs that patience had had its perfect work ; and that there were bounds beyond which even their “sovereign Lord God the Pope” and his Italian handitti could not safely go. Hood-winked, and priest-ridden, as the English nation had long been, they began towards the close of this long and oppressive reign, to exhibit some indications that common sense had not entirely abandoned the nation. False decretals and new orders of monks were imported to allay the threatening storm. But the almighty potency of the enchantments of *The Mother of Harlots* was broken. The eyes of the nation began to behold things in their true light.

Henry’s successor, Edward I, was a vigorous prince ; and by no means disposed to yield to the usurpations of the clergy or the pope. He paid the tribute money, promised by John, with great reluctance ; and though the oppressions of Rome long continued, a burden heavy to be borne, and the kingdom was bound in the chains of ignorance and superstition for successive ages yet to come—still, it is true, that during the reign of the third Henry and the first Edward, some rays of light began to break upon benighted England—sufficient to show something of the true character of his pretended holiness of Rome. His power over England had now reached its height ; yea, and began to wane somewhat.

*The Dominicans and Benedictines introduced into  
England.*

The bare-footed and poverty-pleading Dominicans and Franciscans, who first appeared in England about 1221—

1234,\* raised, for a season, the drooping credit of Rome. These mendicant monks, by their pretensions to piety, by their austerities and indefatigable labors in travelling through the land, and preaching, and visiting the sick and dying, secured to their orders immense wealth, and finally engrossed nearly all of the clerical influence of the kingdom. These friars being now the favorite troops of the pope, made good, for a time, his possession of the kingdom, which the ignorance, and indolence, and corruptions of the old clergy, and the rapacity of the papal court itself, had of late considerably weakened. At length, however, the rapacity and success of these sanctified harpies around the bishops and the secular and established clergy, and the war which broke out between them, helped to prepare the way for the emancipation of the kingdom from papal chains.

*Bishop Grosseteste, or Greathead.*

It was about the middle of this century that Grosseteste, or Greathead, as he is sometimes called, flourished. He was bishop of Lincoln ; and is celebrated by Matthew Paris—himself a Romanist, but a candid historian—as “ the open reprover both of my lord the pope and of the king, and the censurer of the prelates, the corrector of monks, the director of priests, the instructor of the clergy, the supporter of scholars, the preacher to the laity, the punisher of incontinence, the diligent investigator of various writings, and lastly, he was the scourge of lazy and selfish Romans, whom he heartily despised :”† or, as Clarke has it,—“ A mall to the Romanists, and a contemner of their doings.”‡

This good man’s labors and protests against papal extor-

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\* See Milner, Vol. II. Cent. XIII. Chap. 5.

† Quoted by Milner, Cent. XIII. Chap. 7.

‡ Martyrology, Chap. 56.

tion and corruption were of little avail. He lived too soon. The time had not yet come for one to chase a thousand, or for two to put ten thousand to flight. He was honored with an excommunication from the pope, as a reward for the fidelity with which he had labored to correct ecclesiastical abuses: he nevertheless continued in his bishopric to the day of his death, regardless of the thunder of the Vatican. "He departed this world which he never loved," A. D. 1253—to the great joy of Innocent IV, who exclaimed, on hearing the intelligence—"I rejoice, and let every true son of the Roman church rejoice with me, that my great enemy is removed."\*

*Bradwardine and Fitzralph.*

But the "Man of Sin" was not to be so easily rid of reprovers. Other, and more *successful* laborers, if not more worthy men, were soon to appear in the same field in which Grosseteste had toiled and died. The learned, humble, and pious Bradwardine, confessor to Edward III, and afterwards archbishop of Canterbury; and the intrepid Irish prelate, Fitzralph, whose vigorous opposition to the mendicant impostors of his day and the tyranny of Rome, embittered his life with persecution, and terminated it in painful exile—deserve to be mentioned among "the three mighty men of the fourteenth century. But he who "sat in the seat, chief among the captains" of the Lord's hosts in this century, is yet to be named.†

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\* See Milner, as above.

† Milner, Cent. XIV. Chap. 1, notices Fitzralph, or Fizraf, as he calls him. Prof. Le Bas, in his "Life of Wicklif"—Introduction—gives some account of Fitzralph, Grosseteste, and Bradwardine, and many other topics introduced in these pages. The reader will find an interesting account of Greathead, as he is called, in Jones' Church History, Vol. II.

We are now drawing near to a memorable epoch in the history of the English church—yea, of Christendom itself. An epoch, for the better understanding and appreciation of which this whole survey of the English church has been undertaken. It was in the course of this century that the *STAR OF THE REFORMATION* arose in the English horizon. A star of heavenly radiance ; whose light, while it shot terror into “the Seat of the Beast,” cheered the hearts of multitudes who were waiting for the “Consolation of Israel,” by guiding the footsteps of wise men to the source of all truth.

JOHN WICKLIFFE was born early in the fourteenth century. The following chapter will be devoted to an exhibition of the life and sentiments of this great and good man ; and thus will be resumed, after this long digression, the proper history of Congregationalism.

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## CHAPTER VII.

JOHN WICKLIFFE, “THE MODERN DISCOVERER OF THE PRINCIPLES OF CONGREGATIONAL DISSENT,” A. D. 1324.

JOHN WICKLIFFE is entitled to a prominent place in the History of Congregationalism. This remarkable man, “honored of God to be the first preacher of a general reformation to all Europe,”\* and “the modern discoverer of the doctrines of Congregational dissent,”† was born about

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\* Milton, quoted in the Edin. Enc. Art. Wycliffe.

† London and Westminster Review, No. 1. 1837, Art. John De Wycliffe.—The name of the Reformer is spelt in almost every conceivable way : as Wiclif, Wickliff, Wickleif, Wycliffe, De Wyc-

the year 1324. The place of his nativity was a small village bearing his name, near Richmond, Yorkshire county, England. His ancestors appear to have been persons of wealth and distinction, who, from the Norman conquest, in 1066, to the end of the sixteenth century, "were lords of the manor, and patrons of the rectory" of Wickliffe.\*

Wickliffe was early designed for the church. He entered Queen's college (so called from its founder Philippa, queen of Edward III.) not far from the year 1340, when about seventeen years of age. Not finding in that recently founded institution the advantages which he desired, he soon removed to Merton college; celebrated as the *Alma Mater* of "the invincible doctor," William Occham, and "the profound doctor," Thomas Bradwardine, and others of no less renown. Here he applied himself to study with so much earnestness and success, that he soon became one of the most distinguished of the sons of Merton. He gave himself, with intense diligence, to the study of the scholastic philosophy so fashionable in his day. He made himself master of all the intricacies of the Aristotelian logic, and familiarized himself with the philosophical mysteries of the

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liffe, etc. The only reason why I write *Wickliffe*, is that the authors whom I first read spelt his name in this way, and I thus acquired the habit of doing the same.

\* I quote from Prof. Le Bas, to whose valuable life of the Reformer I am much indebted. It is published by the Harpers as No. I. of their "Theological Library." With Le Bas', I have compared Milner's extended notice of Wickliffe and his followers, and Clarke's in his "Martyrology," and several other biographical and historical notices of the Reformer. The memoir of the life and writings of this great man by *Dr. Vaughan*, of the London University, "is, unquestionably, the most complete account of his works which has ever yet been laid before the public."—Le Bas, Preface.

Stagirite. "The bitterest enemy of his name [Knighton] has described him as 'second to none in philosophy, and in scholastic discipline altogether incomparable.' " In addition to these accomplishments, Wickliffe devoted himself to the study of the civil and canon, or ecclesiastical law ; and made himself acquainted with " the municipal laws and customs of his own country."\* His varied, and extensive, and accurate knowledge, enabled him to stand " without a rival in the public disputations, which were then in high repute ;"† and procured for him the highest reputation in the university, and in the kingdom generally. This reputation for logical acuteness and scholastic learning gave his peculiar theological opinions great influence. These were formed chiefly by a diligent study of the sacred Scriptures. In the knowledge of these Wickliffe excelled all his contemporaries, and earned from them the enviable title of *The Evangelical Doctor*, or *Gospel Doctor*. But in his devotion to the inspired volume, he did not neglect the fathers of the church : Augustine, Jerome, Basil, and Gregory‡ appear to have been his favorite authors among the primitive writers ; and Grosseteste and Fitzralph among the moderns.

It is impossible for us, in this age of scriptural intelligence, duly to estimate the strength of mind, the depth of principle, and the intrepidity of the man, who, in the *fourteenth* century, could break away from Duns Scotus, Peter Lombard, Aristotle, and " Mother Church," and form his theological opinions from the word of God, aided by the lights of the fourth century. A writer of the twelfth cen-

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\* Le Bas' Life of Wiclif, p. 102.

† Milner, Cent. XIV. Chap. 3.

‡ His biographer does not tell us which of the Gregories, but probably the bishop of Nyssa, in Cappadocia.—See Mosheim, Cent. IV. P. II. Chap. 2.



tury, quoted by Prof. Le Bas, tells us, that in his day—and it was not materially otherwise in Wickliffe's—those teachers who appealed to the Scriptures for authority were “not only rejected as philosophers, but unwillingly endured as clergymen—nay, were scarcely acknowledged to be *men*. They became objects of derision, and were termed *the bullocks of Abraham*, or the *asses of Balaam*.”

In defiance of all this contempt, John Wickliffe became a diligent student of the Bible, and a constant expounder of its sacred contents. “Some three hundred of his manuscript homilies [or expository discourses] are still preserved in the British Museum, and in the libraries of Cambridge and Dublin, and in other collections.”\*

This intimate acquaintance with the truth of God opened the eyes of the faithful student, to the falsehoods of men. He began to see the inconsistencies, and absurdities, and iniquities of those who were the spiritual guides of the people. And what he saw, he dared to speak; and what he spake, was not in doubtful terms. The first publication from his vigorous pen, was in 1356, when he was about twenty-five years old. The nation at that time had been suffering for several years under a grievous plague: probably more than one hundred thousand of his countrymen had fallen before the destroyer: “men’s hearts were failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which [had come] on the earth.” The devout, and perhaps somewhat excited mind of Wickliffe regarded this awful pestilence as the servant of an angry God, sent forth to chastise the nation for its sins, and to announce the commencement of “the last age,” and the speedy approach of the end of the world. Under these impressions he published a tract bearing the title—“*De ultima Ætate Ecclesiae*,”—

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\* Le Bas.

Concerning the Last Age of the Church. In this work he boldly inveighs against the worldliness, the rapacity, the sensuality, the simony, and the utter degeneracy of the clergy ; and denounces them, as blind guides, who, instead of leading the people by precept and example into the ways of truth and holiness, had plunged with them into the abyss of sin and crime. Thus the Reformer fairly launched forth among the stormy elements whose buffetings he was destined long to endure.

About four years after this publication Wickliffe was found in the front rank of opposition to the *Mendicants*.\* Allusion has already been made to the introduction of these pretended poverty-loving beggars. Under pretence of zeal for "Holy Church," they had spread themselves thickly over the kingdom ; and had engrossed nearly all of the clerical duties of the nation. Travelling continually as they did, and numerous as they were, they gained access to all classes of society in every section of the country. They were the companions and confessors of the rich, and the preachers and directors of the poor. Ever ready to confess all that come to them, and ignorant, as they necessarily were, of the character of those who applied for absolution, these Mendicants virtually encouraged every species

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\* The title of "*Mendicants*" is given to the numerous orders in the Romish church, who, under pretence of renouncing the world and all earthly acquisitions, were licensed by the pöpe to roam over the world and make proselytes to anti-christ, and subsist upon the gifts of the people, without having, like the regular clergy, any fixed revenues for their support. Previous to the time of Wickliffe these *beggars* had become so numerous and audacious, that the church herself could not endure them all. Gregory the Xth, therefore, suppressed, in 1272, all but the Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Augustines. The friars who infested England were principally Dominicans and Franciscans.

of iniquity. The wicked would say to each other : " Let us follow our own pleasure. Some one of the preaching brothers will soon travel this way ;—one whom we never saw before, and never shall see again ; so that, when we have had our will, we can confess without trouble or annoyance."\*

Not content with this absorption of the duties of the regular clergy, and this encouragement of crime, these voracious animals laid hold of every civil office within their reach. They even entered the court " in the character of counsellors, and chamberlains, and treasurers, and negotiators of marriage."† By their numerous arts and efforts ; by lying, and begging, and confessing ; by frightening the ignorant, and flattering the rich—" within the four and twenty years of their establishment in England, these friars [had] piled up their mansions to a royal altitude."‡

A man of Wickliffe's character could not contemplate these movements without indignation. But that which brought him more immediately into conflict with these " Black Friars,"‡ was their encroachments on the University of Oxford. The first monastery of the Dominicans was erected near this ancient seat of learning, and enjoyed the countenance and encouragement of its professors. It

\* Matthew Paris, quoted by Le Bas, p. 114.

† Matth Paris in Le Bas, p. 113.—Matthew Paris was " one of the best English historians, from William the Conqueror to the latter end of the reign of Henry III. \* \* He was a man of extraordinary knowledge for the thirteenth century ; and of an excellent moral character ; and, as an historian, of strict integrity."—London Encyclopædia.

‡ This appellation they bore from the circumstance that their dress was black. When they first settled in London, a tract of land was given them by the city, which lies along the Thames, and still bears the name of *Black friars*.

was not long, however, before the university had reason to deplore the influence of the friars. Their acquaintance with all classes in society, in all parts of the kingdom; their pretensions to piety; their influence and wealth; enabled them to draw away from the university, to their monasteries, vast numbers of young men. Many parents, unwilling to have their sons enter on a life of mendicancy, "were more willing," as Fitzralph tells us, "to make them '*erthe tilyers*' [earth tillers], and *have* them, than to send them to the universitie, and *lose* them." The operation of these causes, in a few years reduced the number of students in Oxford, from *thirty* thousand to *six* thousand. It was not to be expected that the university would tamely submit to such encroachments upon its prerogatives. Aided by the bishops and the regular clergy, her professors had for some time been at war with the mendicant army, when, in 1360, Wickliffe entered the lists. His earnest, bold, and effective opposition to these depredators, secured the gratitude of the learned, and the esteem of the community. His learning, and talents, and fearless advocacy of the rights of the university were soon after rewarded by an appointment to the wardenship, or presidency of Baliol college; and in 1365, to that of Canterbury Hall. From this last station he was removed, under circumstances of great injustice, by archbishop Langham, a *protege* of the pope. From this unrighteous act, Wickliffe appealed to his holiness; who, after a delay of *three* or *four years*, confirmed the doings of the primate. Such a decision might have been anticipated by any one who witnessed the Reformer's course, during the pendency of his cause at Rome. For, "regardless of consequences," he had "continued his attacks on the insatiable ambition, tyranny, and avarice of the ruling ecclesiastics; as also, on the idleness, debauchery, and hy-

pocrisy of the friars ;\*—a sufficient refutation of the charge, that personal resentment for his ejection from Canterbury Hall, was the main-spring of his opposition to the pope and his ecclesiastics.

In the meantime Wickliffe was publicly challenged to defend his prince, Edward III, and the parliament, in their refusal to pay the pope, the odious tribute stipulated by king John. This challenge he readily accepted, and stood forth the advocate for British independence, against the usurpations and tyranny of Rome ;—an undertaking as odious in Rome, as it was popular in England. It probably secured for him the favor of the court, and the protection which he afterwards experienced from the machinations of his enemies. These labors for the university, the king, and his country, in addition to his high merit as a scholar and divine, obtained for the Reformer the degree of Doctor of Divinity, which he received in 1372, and the theological chair of Oxford. These honors gave him yet more extensive influence ; and enabled him to labor with greater success in the cause of truth. His love of the Scriptures, and his desire to enlighten his countrymen induced him, soon after his elevation to the theological professorship, to prepare a plain and familiar exposition of the Ten Commandments, for general circulation. The necessity for such a work may be estimated by what he tells us in his preface,—that it was no uncommon thing for men “ *to call God, Master, forty, three-score, or four-score years ; and yet remain ignorant of his Ten Commandments.*” This publication was followed by several small tracts, entitled “ The Poor Catiff,” or instruction for the poor ; “ written in English, as the author declares, for the purpose of ‘ *teaching simple men and women the way to heaven.*’ ”†

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\* Milner, Cent. XIV. Chap. 3.

† These tracts, with some other selections from Wickliffe's prac-

These humble labors of the learned professor, furnish a beautiful commentary on his religious character, and are in perfect keeping with the enviable title which he long enjoyed of *The Evangelical Doctor*.

In the year 1374, Wickliffe was called from the university, into public life. He was sent by parliament on an embassy to the pope, to obtain the redress of certain ecclesiastical grievances under which the kingdom was then suffering.

In the chapter preceding this, a brief sketch was given of some of the prominent abuses to which the English nation were for a long time subjected ; by which the wealth of the kingdom was absorbed by the clergy—mendicant and regular—or drained off by the pope. These abuses had continued, despite of complaints, and protests, and temporary resistance. There had long been gathering in the breasts of the people, a spirit of opposition to the tyranny of Rome. This with difficulty had been kept under, by the united power of the throne, and the clergy. England had now (in 1374) been ruled for more than forty years by one of her most accomplished and popular monarchs. Edward III, though guilty of many arbitrary acts of government, had the wisdom, or the policy, to consult the opinions and wishes of his subjects more than any one of his predecessors. He was a hero and a conqueror ; and, as such, had acquired great applause and influence in that semi-barbarous age. His numerous warlike expeditions compelled him to call frequently for supplies from his parliament ; and his good sense, or his necessities, induced him to yield more to their pleasure in granting privileges, and immunities, and protections to the people, than had been common

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tical writings, have been published by the London Religious Tract Society.

previous to his time. The authority of the *Great Charter* was so often confirmed during this reign, that it became immovably fixed, as a limitation of the royal power. The king was made to feel that there was a power *under* the throne, if not above it, whose heavings were not to be despised, nor disregarded with impunity. The people, for whose benefit all government—civil and ecclesiastical—should be administered, but who had hitherto been least regarded in its administration ; who had been trampled upon by their princes and nobles, and worst of all, by their clergy—began now to rear their heads, and raise their indignant voices. With such teachers as John Wickliffe and his “poor priests,” the English nation were likely to understand something of their ecclesiastical rights, and to assert them with more courage and success than ever before. The people moved parliament, and the parliament moved the king—himself no wise unfavorably disposed—to inquire into the ecclesiastical abuses, by which the pope and his creatures were eating out the vitals of the kingdom. The result of this inquiry was the discovery, that more than one half of the landed property of the kingdom was in the hands of a corrupt and indolent clergy ;—that many of the most lucrative benefices were in the possession of foreigners, and some of them but boys, who knew not the language of the country, nor had even so much as set foot on English soil ;—that the pope’s collector and receiver of Peter’s pence, who kept “an house in London, with clerks and officers thereunto belonging—transported yearly to the pope twenty thousand marks, and most commonly more ;”—that other foreign dignitaries, holding ecclesiastical benefices in the kingdom though residing at Rome, received yearly an equal, or greater sum (20,000 marks) for their sinecures ;—and finally, “that the tax paid to the pope of

Rome for ecclesiastical dignities, doth amount to *five-fold* as much as the tax of all the profits, as appertain to the king, by the year, of this whole realm.”\*

Such were some of the results of the inquiry, set on foot by the parliament, into the ecclesiastical abuses of that age. Wickliffe was one of the commissioners chosen by parliament to lay these complaints before the court of Rome.

The conference with the pope was appointed at Bruges, a large city of Austria. Thither the English commissioners repaired. They soon found, however, that they had brought their wares to a glutted market. Ecclesiastical abuses were things little regarded by the Roman traders. It was like carrying coals to New Castle, to carry their budget of complaints to Bruges. The mission was, nevertheless, attended with one advantage—it forced wide open the eyes of the Reformer; he no longer saw “men as trees walking; but he beheld, as with open vision, the full grown *Man of Sin*, the antichrist of the latter days. On his return to England, Wickliffe openly denounced *His Holiness*, as “*the most cursed of clippers, and purse kervers,*”—*purse cutters*; and made the kingdom ring with his descriptions of papal impostures, and papal corruptions.

These bold and violent attacks upon the sovereign pontiff and his dissolute clergy, were neither unnoticed nor unheeded at Rome. The storm of hierarchal wrath had long been gathering; and its thunders at length began to mutter over the Reformer’s head. King Edward was now aged and infirm, and nigh unto death; and Richard II, his grandson and successor, was a minor. The hierarchy, probably, deemed this a favorable time to attack the obnoxious heretic. Accordingly, in 1377, Wickliffe was cited to appear

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\* The reader will find an abstract of the complaints of the parliament, founded on this investigation, in Le Bas, pp. 153, 154.



before the convocation of the clergy, to answer to the charge of heresy. It was a moment of peril to the Reformer ; there was in his judges the willing mind to do their worst upon him ; and, if no arm more mighty than theirs should be revealed for his protection, the days of the good man's usefulness, and perhaps of his life, were numbered. At this critical juncture, God raised up for his servant a powerful friend and protector in the person of the duke of Lancaster, commonly known as *John of Gaunt*, so called from the place of his birth. He was the third son of Edward III, and uncle to Richard II, and principal regent of the kingdom during the minority. *Henry Percy*, earl marshal of England, also befriended Wickliffe. These noblemen bade him be of good cheer ; and, for his encouragement and protection, attended him in person to the house of convocation. Immediately on the entrance of the party, a quarrel commenced between the high-blooded Percy and the bishop of London ; which, from words, had well nigh come to blows. This personal quarrel, between my lord clerical and my lord secular, so disturbed the proceedings of the convocation, that it soon broke up in confusion, and its victim escaped untouched.

During the same year (1377), parliament called on Wickliffe to give his judgment on the question :—" Whether the kingdom of England, on an eminent necessity of its own defence, might lawfully detain the treasure of the kingdom, that it might not be carried out of the land ; although the lord pope required it, on pain of censures, and by virtue of the obedience due to him."

This question, so illustrative of the exorbitance of the pope, and of the rising spirit of the nation, Wickliffe answered boldly in the affirmative.

These repeated good offices for his country, though they

rendered the Reformer eminently popular in England, were treasuring up wrath for him in Rome. Before the close of the year 1377, the thunders of the Vatican were again pealing over his head. No less than four bulls were let loose from Rome, armed with power to overthrow and punish "the audacious innovator." In these instruments, "His Holiness" laments and denounces "the pernicious heresy" and the "detestable insanity" which had induced "John Wickliffe, rector of the church of Lutterworth, and professor of the Sacred Page—(it were well if he were not a master of errors)—to spread abroad opinions utterly subversive of the church," etc. \* \* ; and ordered *secret* inquiry to be made into the matters charged against him, and if found true, the heretic to be immediately seized, and imprisoned, and detained, "until further directions should be received." Three of these papal bulls were addressed to the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of London; who cordially reciprocated the *dolors* of "His Holiness;" and eagerly desired to glut their malice upon the impudent reformer. But the fourth bull, addressed to the University of Oxford, met with a very cold reception. The zeal of the primate soon prepared another inquisitorial court to try the heretic,—and Wickliffe was summoned to Lambeth chapel to give account of himself to the ecclesiastical powers. The Londoners, who were now "deeply infected by the heresy of Wickliffe," getting wind of what was going on, surrounded the chapel of the archbishop, and gave such demonstrations of interest in the defender of the people's rights, as materially to disturb the equanimity of the papal conclave. To add to their discomfiture, in the midst of their deliberations, a messenger arrived from the court, "positively forbidding them to proceed to any definite sentence against Wickliffe." Thus, a second time, was the prey delivered from the jaws of the devourer.

These threatening dangers, and these narrow escapes, rather inflamed, than cooled the ardor of the Reformer. He boldly advocated a thorough reform of the church ; and declared his willingness to suffer and die, if necessary, in order to promote this.

The death of pope Gregory XI, which occurred the next year, 1378, and the notorious papal schism, occasioned by the election of two popes, as successors to Gregory, saved Wickliffe, for some time, from further molestation. Their holinesses were too much occupied in forging and fulminating thunderbolts against each other, to pay much attention to the English heretic. This interval of rest from persecution, was diligently employed by Wickliffe in writing and circulating tracts and books, in which the corruptions of the clergy and the antichristian character of popery were unsparingly exhibited.

But the great work of Wickliffe during these years of rest from papal persecution, (1379—1381) and that which did more than all his other labors to promote the truth, and to open the eyes of the nation to the antichristian character of the entire hierarchy, and which has handed down to posterity the name of this great man in the brightest halo of glory, was the translation of the entire Bible into the vernacular language of the country.

John Wickliffe undoubtedly deserves the honor of having given to his country the first complete translation of the Scriptures in the English language.\* With great personal labor, and by the aid of learned assistants, he wrote out an entire English version of the Sacred Word. Copies of this

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\* The reader will find this point ably discussed and satisfactorily settled in the sixth chapter of Le Bas' "Life of Wiclif." Usher supposed one English version to have been made as early as 1290. —London Encyc. Art. English Bible. But this opinion is not now generally entertained.

were multiplied by transcribers—for there was no printing in those days, and the “poor priests,” as Wickliffe’s preaching disciples were called,—scattered them over the kingdom. To the Scriptures the Reformer appealed for the truth of his doctrines; and men were everywhere urged to search the Scriptures and “see if these things were so.”

The minions of the hierarchy were in the terrors of death when they saw this light streaming through the land. They hated the light, because their deeds were evil; and they would not come to it, lest their deeds should be re-proved. Wickliffe was denounced as a sacrilegious wretch, who had presumed to rend the veil from the holy of holies, and expose the secrets of God’s honor to the unhallowed gaze of the profane multitude. For centuries the reading of the Bible, by the common people, had been prohibited. A needless exercise of papal impiety, to be sure, when the Sacred Treasure was locked up in a language unknown to the mass of the people; and when the scarcity and expense of a single copy was such as to defy the ability of nine hundred and ninety-nine men in a thousand to procure the prohibited book.\* Still the prohibition was a fair exhibition of papal principles; and should not be forgotten by the friends of the Bible. But while the clergy declaimed against the impious version, the “poor priests” multiplied and scattered “the seed of the word;” and the poor people, so long doomed to endure “a famine of the word of God,” devoured the bread with great avidity; and, like the honey

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\* Some notion may be formed of the difficulty of getting a copy of the Bible before Wickliffe’s translation appeared, from the fact that, although his versions were multiplied beyond any previous precedent, and scattered over every part of the kingdom—yet a copy of his New Testament alone, cost from £30 to £40, or from 133 to 177 dollars, Federal money.—See Lond. Encyc. Art. Scriptures.

tasted by Jonathan in the wood, it enlightened the eyes of all who ate of it. It enabled them to see, not only the corrupt and antichristian character of the entire system of popery, to which they had so long been dupes and willing slaves,—but it taught them also the corruption of their own natures, and their need of the washing of regeneration. It proved to the people of England, what it did to the children of Israel, when, in the days of Josiah “the book of the law” was discovered among the rubbish of the temple, and was brought out and “read in their ears”—the means of an extensive revival of pure religion in the nation.

Wickliffe, profiting by the example of the Man of Sin, reared up numerous preachers of his doctrines, and sent them forth, as the mendicant orders had at first gone—or rather as Christ’s disciples first went forth—with their staves in their hands, and the sacred word in their bosoms, preaching everywhere that men should repent and turn from their vanities to the worship of the only living and true God, and to the exercise of faith in this only Savior of man and intercessor with God—Jesus Christ the righteous.

And so wonderfully successful were these preachers, that the ancient English Chroniclers tell us, that one half of the inhabitants of the kingdom in a short time became Lollards or Wickliffites.

### *The Last Days of Wickliffe.*

We are now approaching the end of the good man’s eventful life. His last days, if his *best* days, were not the most peaceful. Though worn down by incessant labor, and harassed by opposition and persecution, and admonished by repeated attacks of sickness—he still manifested no disposition to cease from his labors ; he seemed resolved

to die in the harness. During the last three years of his life, his mind, his tongue—when he could speak—and his pen, were incessantly busy in the great work to which he had consecrated his life—the reform of the church. “His search into the Scriptures, and into ecclesiastical antiquity,”\* opened the eyes of the Reformer to see more and more of the anti-scriptural character of the entire hierarchal system of those days. He boldly attacked the wealth, and pride, and pomp, and ornaments of the established order. His thundering artillery threatened the utter overthrow of the ancient fortress of popery itself.

Hitherto Wickliffe seems to have enjoyed the protection and patronage of the court; and God had used this to keep at bay the bulls of Rome. But now, John of Gaunt, openly forsook his old and faithful friend. Le Bas attributes this to the doctrine about this time (1381) advanced by Wickliffe respecting the sacramental symbols, viz. that “the consecrated host we see upon the altar, is neither Christ nor any part of him, but an effectual sign of him; and that transubstantiation, indentification, or impanation, rest upon no scriptural ground.”

A more probable solution of this matter may be found in the fact, that Wickliffe’s doctrines were beginning to threaten the *English*, as well as the *Romish* hierarchy.† The duke of Lancaster, the earl marshal of England, and other noblemen, were ready to support the Reformer, so long as his labors tended to break down the despotic and destructive power of the pope over the kingdom; but when his labors began to threaten a complete reformation in the

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\* Hume.

† See a valuable article upon “Congregational Dissenters,” in the London and Westminster Review for October, 1837. American Ed. Vol. IV. No. 1.

polity of the church, then courtiers were among the first to cry—" *Hold, enough !*"

What Wickliffe's ecclesiastical views were, we shall presently consider. And, in the course of this history, we shall have occasion to remark the same courtly policy in staying the hands of later reformers. For the present, we will pass on to notice the immediate effects of the things to which allusion has just been made.

The protection of the great being withdrawn, the whole pack,—

" The little dogs and all,  
Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart \* \*  
Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim,  
Hound, or spaniel, brach, or lym ;"

—The pope, the king, the archbishop, the bishops, the mendicants, and friars—were immediately in full chase. Their noble game was driven from the covert of Oxford by order of the king ; the archbishop procured the condemnation of his doctrines in a synod of the clergy ; the bishops, by " letters mandatory " to their abbots and priors, clergy and ecclesiastical functionaries, required the immediate suppression of the impious and audacious doctrines of the Reformer. In addition to all this, parliament was petitioned to provide a remedy against " the innumerable errors and impieties of the Lollards ;" a royal ordinance was surreptitiously obtained by the clergy, empowering " the sheriffs of counties to arrest such preachers and their abettors, and to detain them in prison, until they should justify themselves according to law, and reason of holy Church ;" and, to cap the climax, the pope himself summoned the heretic to appear at Rome, and give account of himself to the vicar of God.

Well might the good man have adopted the words of his master : " They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a

ravening and a roaring lion." \* \* "Dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me."\* Amidst the gathering storm, the good man labored on. When driven from the university, he found shelter among his affectionate parishioners at Lutterworth. Here he preached and wrote with unflinching boldness and untiring activity. But the servant was doing his last work for his much loved master. God protected him and preserved his life while he had work for him to do; but, having finished his task, he was soon to be called home. The incessant labor of twenty years, had shattered the earthly tabernacle, and brought upon the faithful laborer a premature old age; and finally, produced a paralysis of all his powers, which terminated his invaluable life on the 31st day of December, Anno Domini 1384. When the summons came he was where a soldier would choose to die—at his post. He fell as a warrior would wish, on the field of battle, sword in hand. He was in his church, administering the sacrament when a paralytic shock deprived him of speech and motion. He lingered two days; and then, as we have the best reason to believe—*slept in Jesus*. "Admirable," exclaims the quaint and candid Fuller, "that a hare so often hunted, with so many packs of dogs, should die, at last, quietly sitting in his form."†

Thus died John Wickliffe; the most remarkable man of his age; and one of the most distinguished reformers of any age. His name and works have been the subjects of the most unqualified abuse by the violent Papist; and of the *semi*-heartly praise of the devoted churchman.‡ The

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\* Psalm 22: 13, 19.

† Quoted by Le Bas, p. 265.

‡ I refer particularly to Mr. Milner, whose extended notice of Wickliffe's life and labors is open to many objections; and in some points is manifestly unjust and injurious to the memory of the



Congregational dissenter, while he admits that Wickliffe was subject to human infirmities, and like other men liable to error ; that the truth gradually opened upon his mind ; and that, even to his death, some of the shreds of popery may have clung around him ;—while, I say, he admits all this, still he must revere John Wickliffe as “ *the modern discoverer of the principles of Congregational Dissent.*”

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### ECCLESIASTICAL OPINIONS OF WICKLIFFE.

Having claimed Wickliffe as a remote ancestor of the denomination whose history occupies these pages, it will be expected that I give more fully than has yet been done, the grounds on which this claim rests. In this attempt, I shall labor under the disadvantage of having but a very small portion of the Reformer's own writings to draw from ; and of being obliged to depend chiefly upon the representations of those who had no partiality for apostolic simplicity in church polity, for my information. Still, I think it may be made to appear, that the relationship between the Reformer of the fourteenth century, and the Reformers of the seventeenth—is something more than imaginary.

1. The prominent doctrine of Wickliffe's creed which allies him to modern Congregationalists was—THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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Reformer. In reading Milner's account, one is almost provoked to say—He damns Wickliffe with faint praise. Prof. Le Bas' work is a very different affair ; he corrects “ the historian of the Church ” in several particulars ; he might have done more.

His habit of "*postillating*," or expounding a portion of Scripture to his parishioners on the Sabbath, instead of "*declaring*," or preaching a sermon from a single text, or uttering an oration upon a particular subject—is a decisive evidence of his high regard for the Scriptures. His translation of the Bible into English, is a still stronger evidence of his veneration for the inspired writings.

Add to the above, the Reformer's own words upon this point. In one place he says: "Scripture is the faith of the church, and the more it is known in an orthodox sense the better."\*

What he considered an "orthodox sense," so far as religious doctrines were concerned, would now be called—a *Calvinistic sense*. His views of church polity will presently appear.

In his tract entitled—"Why many Priests have no Benefices,"—he uses the following language: "Also then shulde priests study holy writt, and be devout in their prayers, and not be carried away with new officers, and mo [more] sacraments than Christ used, and his apostles, *that taughten [taught] us all truth.*"†

The connection in which the italicised words stand to the other part of the sentence, shows conclusively, that Wickliffe supposed that Christ and his apostles, taught us *all the truth* respecting the *order*, as well as the *faith* of the church. This, it will be remembered, is the first great principle of the Congregational system—"The supreme authority and *entire* sufficiency of the Scriptures."‡

Pierce, in his *Vindication of Dissenters*, gives the following

\* "Great Sentence," quoted by Milner, Appendix to second volume, Phil. ed. 1835.

† Milner, Cent. XIV. Chap. 3.

‡ See Le Bas' "Life of Wiclif," pp. 190, 192, 219, 220.

summary of Wickliffe's opinions. "All human traditions, which are not taught in the gospel, are superfluous and wicked—'Tis not lawful for a Christian, after the full publication of the law of Christ, to devise himself any other laws for the government of the church. If the ceremonies of the old law were to cease under the law of grace, because of their burdensomeness and number, how much more should such traditions of men, as are devised without any scripture foundation, cease in the time of the law of grace."\*

2. Another principle of Congregationalism, developed in Wickliffe's writings, relates to the character of those who should constitute the church of Christ.

He defines the church to be—"The Congregation of just men, for whom Christ shed his blood."† In another place, "he calls the church *an assembly of predestinated persons*."‡

From such passages, which abound in Wickliffe's writings, we are authorized to infer that he considered apparent piety an indispensable pre-requisite to real church membership.

3. In reference to the government and worship of the church. He maintained that Christ is the only head of the church; and that "no true man will dare to put two heads, lest the church be monstrous."‡ And, "that we must practice and teach only the laws of Christ;" \* \* "that all human traditions are superfluous and sinful; that mystical and significant ceremonies in religious worship are unlawful;—and that, to restrain men to a prescribed form of prayer is contrary to the liberty granted by God;"§—that

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\* See Palmer's Protest. Dissenter's Catechism, App. No. 3, 20th Edition.

† Milner, Appendix ut sup.

‡ Le Bas, p. 299, from Vaughan, Vol. II. p. 273.

§ Neal's Hist. Puritans, Vol. I, p. 52.

“the short and trifling confirmation performed by Caesarean prelates, together with its pompous mumniery,” was “probably introduced by the instigation of the devil, for the purpose of deluding the people, and advancing the importance and dignity of the Episcopal order.”\*

4. Upon the subject of church officers, the language of Wickliffe is very explicit. “*Unum audacter assero*—one thing I boldly assert, that in the primitive church, or in the time of the apostle Paul, *two orders of clergy were thought sufficient*, viz. *Priest and Deacon*; and I do also say, that in the time of Paul, *fuit idem presbyter atque episcopus*—a priest and a bishop were one and the same; for in those times the distinct orders of Pope, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Officials, and Deans, were not invented.”†

“*By the ordinance of Christ priests and bishops were all one*; but afterwards, the emperor (Constantine,) made bishops lords, and priests their servants; and this was the cause of envy, and quenched much charity.”†

“There was, he said, but *two species of orders*, namely,

\* I quote the language of Le Bas, who professes to give the sense of Wickliffe, in his “*Triologus*,” B. IV. Chap. 14. In giving an account of this “almost fanatical extravagance” of Wickliffe, the professor loses his temper; and seems disposed to doom such “intractable and self-willed spirits” to be “demolished” by the “incomparable irony of Hooker.” How much trouble and vexation our high-church brethren would have been saved, were it as easy to satisfy the “intractable Congregationalist, that he is “demolished,” as it is to convince the lofty churchman of this, to him, very desirable fact. But our brethren must bear with us for not “playing dead” when we feel all alive.

† Neal, Vol. I. p. 51, note. Also an article on “Congregational Dissenters” in the *London and Westminster Review*, Oct. 1837, Vol. IV. No. 1. American ed.

that of deacons, and of priests. The church militant ought not to be burdened with *three* ; nor was there any ground for it.”\*

And again : “ From the faith of Scripture, it seems sufficient that there should be presbyters and deacons, holding the state and office which Christ assigned them ; since it appears that all other orders and degrees have their origin in the *pride of Caesar*. ” †

From these quotations it is perfectly evident that Wickliffe’s “ powerful and independent mind ” rejected and discarded all the pomp, and ceremony, and orders, and degrees, of an hierarchal establishment : and these extracts leave little room to doubt “ whether he would have altogether discarded the Episcopal order, had he been allowed to carry into effect his own principles of reformation. ” ‡

It was not, I humbly conceive, because he was “ pleased to hood-wink his own knowledge ”—as his Episcopal biographer ventures to insinuate—that this great man rejected these “ human rights and new shadows or traditions in religion. ” He had opened his eyes upon the simple and precious truth of God’s word ; he had taken this as the man of his counsel, as his unerring guide. This he regarded as all-sufficient to teach the church of Christ the faith and the order that she should observe and love. It was his strict adherence to the grand Protestant principle—“ The Scripture alone is truth—the Scripture alone is the faith of the church ”—that induced this “ Morning Star ” of the Refor-

\* Milner, Cent. XIV. Chap. 3.

† Le Bas, p. 300.

‡ See Le Bas, p. 209. The Professor intimates his belief that he might have done so ; though he thinks it possible that Wickliffe might have retained the Episcopal order “ as a *convenient and useful appointment*. ” But how could he have retained this consistently with his principles ?

mation to reject all unscriptural and dangerous innovations in the order and worship of the church of Christ. And, it surely was presuming pretty strongly on the intelligence (I should say the *ignorance*) of his readers, for Prof. Le Bas to assert that "from the time of the apostles to the days in which he [Wickliffe] lived, no other form of government but the Episcopal had ever been known to the Christian church." Such an assertion may, for aught I can say, pass current in the "East India College, Herts;" but, sure I am, that Wickliffe's "*unum audacter assero*," will pass quite as current in other circles. That what is now known as the Episcopal form of government, i. e. diocesan—had no existence in the church until a long period after the apostles—is maintained by some of the most learned writers upon ecclesiastical antiquities. This being the state of the question, it would have been more becoming, were a Cambridge fellow to have been less positive in his assertion.

5. To the foregoing statements and illustrations of Wickliffe's ecclesiastical opinions, which seem to entitle him to a place among the modern discoverers of the principles and doctrines of Congregationalists—might be added one or two other particulars, as: "That it was heretical for a prelate to excommunicate any one without knowing him to be already excommunicated by God." \* This opinion is attributed to him by his enemies. I find no particular notice of it by his biographers; and do not consider it sufficient, of itself, to bear a very strong inference: this much, however, we may venture to say—It reminds us of the doctrine of Christ upon the subject of excommunication, as presented in Matt. 18: 15—20, where he teaches, as Congregationalists suppose, that no man should be excommunicated, and cast from the church, "as a heathen man and a publican,"

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\* Le Bas, p. 230.

unless he has, in the judgment of the church, forfeited his Christian character.\*

Another point on which the teachings of Wickliffe are manifestly in accordance with the views of Congregationalists of the present day, relates to the support of the clergy.

This he strenuously maintained should be done by *the voluntary offerings of the people*; and furthermore, that these offerings should be so moderate as neither to pamper the pride, nor encourage luxurious indolence in the clergy; but simply to furnish them a comfortable support, and to enable them to be ensamples to their flocks in deeds of charity. Upon this point he says: "Priests owen [ought] to hold themselves paide with food and cloathing, as St. Paul techeth; and if they have more, it is poor men's goods."† \* \* He insisted, moreover, that even this moderate support should be continued to the clergy, only on condition, of their continued faithfulness to their clerical duties.‡ He maintained that, "If ministers, in the

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\* To avoid misapprehension, it may be well to state, that this opinion does not forbid our churches to discipline members who have not forfeited their Christian standing. We suppose that churches are bound to discipline, and if necessary, to withdraw fellowship from "every brother that walketh *disorderly* (*ἀτάκτως*, *out of order*), i. e. contrary to the order and the rules of discipline established by the church; but, every such departure from the order of the church would not necessarily be a forfeiture of Christian character. A church, satisfied upon this point,—that the erring brother had not forfeited his standing as a Christian—and yet, finding themselves unable to reclaim him, might withdraw fellowship from him as a brother, on the ground that two cannot walk together except they be agreed—while they did not reckon him "as a heathen man and a publican," that is, as a man destitute of the spirit of Christ.

† See his Tract, entitled, "Why many Priests have no Benefices," quoted entire in Milner.

‡ Le Bas, p. 184.

execution of their office, do not act, both by word and example, as God commandeth, their people are not bound to pay them tithes and offerings." And, further, that "When the principal cause for which tithes and offerings should be paid does not exist, the payment of tithes should cease."\*

His biographer tells us: "That Wickliffe seems to have regarded all the endowments of the church as a manifest departure from the original spirit of the Christian system." And, adds: "Had he been allowed to remodel our ecclesiastical polity, he would, probably, have made the clergy dependent on the voluntary offerings of the people."† In another place he tells us: "According to his views, the priesthood may be considered as holding their property under a tenure, liable to forfeiture by such gross abandonment of their duties, as must defeat the purposes for which the Christian ministry was instituted."‡

These doctrines, though sufficiently offensive to his Episcopal biographer, are nevertheless, nowise inconsistent with what Congregationalists regard as sound and scriptural truth.

In has been objected to the Reformer, that his conduct, in deriving his support through the usual hierarchal channels, was inconsistent with his own doctrine. But let it be remembered, that he had no power to alter the existing laws of the kingdom; that he took care so to demean himself as to make all the offerings of his own people for his support, free-will offerings; and that he appropriated to his own use only so much of the income of his rectory as was needful to support a very humble style of living;—wearing, for the most part, a coarse woollen gown, and travelling

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\* Milner, Cent. XIV. Chap. 3.

† Le Bas, p. 269.

‡ Ibid. p. 164.



about his parish, staff in hand, and bare-footed ; so that, in truth, he rather *exceeded* his principles in the rigidity of his life, than fell short of them ; for he insisted that the laborer was worthy of his hire ; that the preacher of the gospel ought to be *comfortably* supported, but not luxuriously.\*

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\* Wickliffe was the contemporary and personal friend of "the father of English poetry, and the brightest ornament of Edward's [III.] court."—*Geoffrey Chaucer*. The poet is said to have been a Wickliffite, and to have suffered for his principles. "A recent intelligent writer," says the London and Westminster Review, "recognizes Wickliffe in the character drawn by the poet, of the parish priest."

"A good man there was of religion,  
 He was a poor parson of a town,  
 But rich he was of holy thought and werk  
 He was also a learned man, a clerk,  
 That Criste's gospel trewely wolde preche ;  
 His parishens devoutly wolde he tech.  
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,  
 And in adversitie full patient ;  
 And swiche he was yproved often sithes,  
 Ful loth were him to cursen for his tithes,  
 But rather wolde he geven out of doute  
 Of his offring and eke of his substance.  
 He could in letle thing have suffisance ;  
 Wide was his parish and houses far asonder,  
 But he ne left nought for no rain ne thunder.  
 In sickeness and in mischeefe to visite  
 The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite,  
 Upon his fete and in his hand a staff.  
 But it [if?] were any person obstinat,  
 What so he were of highe or low estat,  
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones."

See Hippiisley's 'Chapters on Early Eng. Literature.' See also, Le Bas, p. 198. I have followed Hippiisley in the orthography except in the first two lines, that the reader may have a specimen of the English of the fourteenth century.

What has now been said of Wickliffe, will enable the reader to estimate the character and opinions of this great Reformer. He exerted a powerful influence in preparing the way for the Reformation, which took place in England some ages after he had been gathered to his fathers. His writings, many of which were small tracts, were exceedingly voluminous, and were scattered by hundreds—yea thousands—all over the kingdom. These breathed into the nation a spirit as adverse to popery, as it was favorable to thorough Protestantism.

It cannot be questioned, that, had Wickliffe been permitted to reform the English church as he wished, he would have laid the axe at the root of the tree. He would never have been contented with rejecting the *mother*, and adopting the *daughter*. Had his brawny arm been employed in cleaning the Augean stable of the English prelates, he would have made clean-riddance of all the filth of popery. There would have been none of that timid, temporizing, trimming work which was seen in later reformers. He would, undoubtedly, have taken the beautifully simple model of an apostolic church for his pattern; and have constructed the outward order, as well as the religious faith of the church, after the same divine pattern. Milner's estimate of the Reformer's notions of "external reformation," seem clearly to intimate his belief of this. He tells us, that he would have "erred in the extreme of excess," had he been permitted to carry out his notions of church reform. Le Bas evidently rejoices with trembling to think what the church of England escaped, by not having been reformed by the strong arm of Wickliffe. He says: "Had he succeeded in shaking the established system to pieces, one can scarcely think, without some *awful misgivings*, of the fabric which, under his hand, might have risen out of

the ruins." And the ground of these "*awful misgivings*" of the good churchman are very clearly exhibited, when he says:—"If the reformation of our church had been conducted by Wickliffe, his work, in all probability, *would nearly have anticipated the labors of Calvin*; and the Protestantism of England might have pretty closely resembled the Protestantism of Geneva."

And when he adds, that, as one fruit of this reformation—"Episcopal government might have been discarded;" one who has contemplated the manifold evils of that "Episcopal government" which the Reformation has entailed upon England, can hardly refrain from exclaiming, O that Wickliffe had succeeded in his scriptural labors!

And when the professor speaks of another of the *evils* which might have resulted from the execution of Wickliffe's plan of reformation—"the clergy might have been consigned to a degrading [!] dependence on their flocks"—no good Congregationalist can sympathize at all, with his "*awful misgivings*." Least of all, can any of the thousands, who for centuries have groaned under the oppressive burden of the English national church establishment.

As a confirmation of this general train of remark respecting the reformatory principles of Wickliffe, and as a good specimen of the style in which the lovers of "The Establishment" allow themselves to speak, I will quote one paragraph more from Le Bas: "Had Wickliffe flourished in the sixteenth century, it can hardly be imagined that he would have been found under the banners of Cranmer and of Ridley. Their caution, their patience, their moderation, would scarcely have been intelligible to him; and rather than conform to it, he might, perhaps, have been ready, if needful, to *perish, in the gainsaying* [!!] of such men as Knox or Cartwright. At all events, it must plainly be con-

fessed, that there is a marvellous resemblance between the Reformer, with his poor itinerant priests, and at least the better part of the Puritans, who troubled our Israel [our Jezebel] in the days of Elizabeth and her successors. The likeness is sufficiently striking, almost to mark him out as their prototype and progenitor; and therefore it is, that every faithful son of the church of England must rejoice with trembling, that the work of her final deliverance was not consigned to him.”\*

The almost contemptuous style in which this writer is pleased to speak of the Puritans of the sixteenth century, deserves special notice. These men who are sneered at as *gainsayers*, by an English churchman of the nineteenth century, are the very men whom an infidel historian is constrained to honor as the preservers of the precious spark of English liberty!—Yes, and of English Protestantism too.—But more of this anon.

Such was John Wickliffe—in character and in principle—a great man, and a good man. A reformer of the purest intentions, and of the soundest general principles. The Bible was the lamp by which he sought for truth. The Bible was the rod by which he would have measured everything pertaining to the church; this was the standard to which he would have reduced the outward form and order, and indeed, the entire polity of the church. He would not have exposed the church of England to the taunt of one of her most eloquent statesmen†—of having “an Arminian clergy and a popish liturgy.” He would have left none of the elements of popery in the constitution and ceremonies of the church; he would have purged out thoroughly all that leaven of impurity, which, to this very day, is working death in the English church.‡ The Oxfordism which

\* Le Bas “Life of Wiclif, p. 325.

† Chatham.

‡ It has recently been asserted in the public prints, that it is no

now threatens her peace—yea, her very Protestantism,—would have found no hiding places in the plain, and simple, and scriptural building which Wickliffe would have reared.

The time, however, had not then arrived—when the English nation were fully prepared for so great a deliverance. Neither indeed, has it yet fully come. But the day of her redemption is, we trust, drawing on—yea, beginning to dawn.

The manner in which the principles of Wickliffe were treated, and his followers persecuted, must receive attention before we enter upon other scenes to which the labors of the Reformer were a prelude.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE LOLLARDS.\*—PERSECUTION.

It has been repeatedly intimated in the course of the preceding pages—that Wickliffe was not alone in the reception of the principles which have been ascribed to him.

uncommon thing to find crucifixes and pictures of the Virgin Mary, in the rooms of the students of Oxford University.

\* The term *Lollard*, or *Lollhard*, appears to have been a title of contempt, affixed to such dissenters as were specially averse to the impositions of popery. In other words, it was a nickname given the friends of God, by the worshippers of the pope.

Mosheim supposes that the name was derived from the German "*lullen*, *lollen*, or *lullen*, and the well known termination—*hard*, which is subjoined to so many German words." The word *lollen*, or *lullen*, signifies in German, *to sing with a low voice*; hence our English word *lull*; as *to lull asleep*. A *Lullen*, therefore, was a

At the head of his disciples must be placed the itinerant preachers, who had been instructed by the Reformer, and sent forth to proclaim his doctrines, in every part of the kingdom. These he called by the humble and familiar name of—" *Poor Priests.*" Some of them were persons of education, and talents, and eloquence ; others were more distinguished for their humble piety, and fervent zeal in the cause of truth, than for their literary acquisitions. Whatever their pretensions to education, and however different their former habits of living, they all adopted the same methods for propagating the doctrines of their instructor. Furnished with a portion of the Sacred Text, and perhaps a few of the popular tracts of the Reformer, they took their staves and went forth, preaching everywhere the truths of the Gospel and the principles of the Reformation. In those days, as in earlier times,—the common people heard the Gospel most gladly,—and some of the priests, too, were obedient unto the faith. Even some of "Caesar's household" received the truth in the love of it.

The Romanists tell us, that the people were flattered by being made judges of the truth ; the poor priests always appealing to the Scriptures, for proof of what they taught. A precious confession this. It forcibly reminds us of what took place some fourteen hundred years before John Wickliffe's time ; when certain poor priests were sent forth to preach a new doctrine to a corrupt hierarchy ; which,

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singer—a *Lullenhard*, or Lollard, was one *much engaged* in singing. And when applied to a religionist, it was equivalent to one much employed in religious worship—much engaged in singing God's praises. When applied to heretics, as a nickname, it was equivalent to *hypocrite*, or one who made great pretensions to piety ; just as the term—" *praying-ones*" or " *godly-ones*," is used to this day.—See a long note on this subject in Mosheim, Cent. XIV. P. II. Chap. 2, note 68.

when the people heard, and doubted, they “Searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.” The result in both cases was the same—“Therefore, many of of them believed;”—Acts 17: 11, 12. The prevalence of these “revolutionary principles” alarmed the pope and his bishops, and their clergy. And well they might be alarmed; for, we are told: If you met two persons in the high-way, one of them, you might be sure was a Lollard. Nor were these opinions confined to the vulgar; Oxford, if we may believe the archbishop of Canterbury, “was tainted with novel and damnable Lollardism, to the intolerable and notorious scandal of the University.”

To suppress this growing heresy, the clergy, after employing in vain, the bulls of the pope and the *mandatories* of the bishops, surreptitiously obtained an act of parliament, “requiring sheriffs to apprehend the preachers of heresy and their abettors.”\* The Commons protested against this act, as fraudulently obtained, without their consent or knowledge. The clergy, nevertheless, had art and power sufficient to prevent the repeal of the act, “which remains this day upon the statute book;”† and is memorable in English history as the first act by which the secular arm was made the instrument of clerical persecution. This law was made as early as 1381, in the life time of Wickliffe. It was, however, so unpopular with the Commons, and withal, so fraudulently obtained, that the bishops were too politic to press its immediate application. They were hoping for better days; and such days were near at hand.

In 1388, commissioners were appointed in different counties, to hunt up and seize all “the little books” of Wickliffe. And a royal proclamation was made, forbid-

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\* Hume's Richard II. Chap. 17. Neal's Hist. Pur. Vol. I. p. 54.

† Hume.

ding all persons to use these "pernicious writings," or to maintain the "scandalous opinions which they contained."\*

Still the Lollards multiplied ; and about the year 1394, pope Boniface IX, thought it necessary to address an urgent request to the king and the church of England, "to root out and destroy the maintainers of doctrines, subversive of the state, both civil and ecclesiastical."

In the year 1399 the incompetent Richard II. was de-throned and murdered by the ambitious and powerful duke of Lancaster, the son of Wickliffe's patron and protector, who usurped the throne, under the title of Henry IV.

Coming to the throne by violence, and destitute of any just title, Henry thought it necessary to court the favor of the clergy by giving them their heart's desire, in the form of a law against heretics. By this law the bishops were empowered to try, imprison, and fine at discretion, all heretical persons. "Those that refused to abjure their errors, or after abjuration relapsed, were to be delivered over to the secular power, and the mayors, sheriffs, or bailiffs were to be present (if required) when the bishop or his commissary passed sentence, and after sentence, they were to receive them, and in some high place *burn them to death* before the people."†

This was the first penal enactment against heretics, which disgraced the English statute book. It was aimed against the Lollards ; and opened that bloody campaign which, for centuries, continued to destroy such as endeavored to conform to the apostolic model in their faith and worship.

This law was made in 1401 ; and its fiery penalty was soon inflicted on one of the disciples of the illustrious Reformer.

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\* Le Bas, p. 360, 361.

† Neal's Puritans, Vol. I. p. 54 ; Hume's Henry IV.



That the reader may have at one view all the machinery of persecution, before the details of its operations are considered, I will, for the present, pass over the short and turbulent reign of Henry IV, to that of his son and successor, the warlike Henry V.

“The Lollards,” says Hume in his account of this reign, “were every day increasing in the kingdom, and were become a formed party, which appeared extremely dangerous to the church, and even formidable to the civil authority.”\* If the Lollards were formidable and dangerous, it was simply because they were opposed to the usurpations and tyranny of both church and state. To ward off these formidable dangers, the reigning powers of the realm thought it necessary to give additional edge to the laws against the lovers of scriptural truths. Accordingly, in the beginning of Henry’s reign—i. e. about the year 1413—a new law was passed against the Lollards or Wickliffites—“That they should forfeit all the lands they had in fee simple, and all their goods and chattels to the king. All state officers, at their entrance into office, were sworn to use their best endeavors to discover them; and to assist the ordinaries [i. e. the judges of the bishop’s court] in prosecuting and convicting them.”

The peculiar violence of this law appears from the fact, that it was levelled against all who should presume to read the Scriptures in the English tongue; which was then termed “*Wicleue’s Learning*.” It was enacted: “That whatsoever they were that should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue, they should forfeit land, catel, lif, godes, from theyr heyres forever, and so be condempned for here-tykes to God, enemies to the crowne, and most errant traitors to the lande.”†

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\* Henry V. Chap. 19.

† See Neal’s Pur. Vol. I. p. 55 and note; Hume’s Hen. V.

But, bitter as was the cup of persecution already forced upon the miserable Lollard, there were new ingredients to be added by the hand of the infamous Chicheley, archbishop of Canterbury. In 1416, this "firebrand of the age" drew up and promulgated an ecclesiastical law, requiring "all suffragans and archdeacons, with their officials and commissaries; to make inquisition, twice in every year, after persons suspected of heresy. Wherever reputed heretics were reported to dwell, three or more of the parish were compelled to take an oath that they would certify to the suffragans, or their officers, what persons were heretics, who kept private conventicles, who differed in life and manners from the common conversation of the faithful, who had suspected books in the vulgar tongue, or were conversant with persons suspected of error. On such information, process was to issue against the accused, who were to be delivered over to the secular court, or imprisoned till the next convocation."\*

"By this accursed ordinance," says Le Bas, "the horrors of the writ for burning heretics were completed. It set up an inquisition in every parish. It sent terror and distrust into every family. Every dwelling was haunted by discord and suspicion: so that a man's bitterest foes were often those of his own household and blood. And the fruits of this flagitious system were, that multitudes were consigned to the dungeon or the stake, by the treachery, or the weakness of their nearest kindred, or their dearest connections."

Such were the merciless laws under which the Wickliffites groaned for more than a hundred years; or to the time of the Reformation, in the days of Henry VIII.

In addition to the encouragement given the clergy to per-

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\* Wilkins's *Concilia*, Vol. III. p. 378, quoted by Le Bas, p. 369.

secute the Lollards, by these violent English laws ; further support was afforded them by the doings of the infamous *Council of Constance*.<sup>\*</sup> This council began its sessions in the year 1414, and continued them *three years* and six months. Its *professed* object was to reform the church. Its *real* object was to prevent any substantial reformation. While, therefore, the managers of this council deluded the world by their pretensions, they diligently employed themselves in condemning all the reformatory doctrines which were abroad ; particularly those of Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome of Prague. The two latter, the council condemned to death ; and enjoyed the exquisite satisfaction of seeing them burned to ashes, with their writings.

On Wickliffe, who was considered the master of these Bohemian reformers, and from whose writings they had doubtless derived many of their opinions—the council could not lay their bloody hands ; since, for thirty years, the good man's remains had slept in the grave. They were obliged, therefore, to content themselves with condemning his writings, and ordering them to be burned ; and directing that “ his body and bones, if they might be discerned and known from the bodies of other faithful people, should be taken from the ground, and thrown far away from the burial of any church, according to the canon laws and decrees.”

This impotent decree could not be carried into immediate execution : but after the lapse of thirteen years it was fulfilled to the letter ; yea, and beyond the letter. The chancel of Lutterworth was ransacked, the remains of Wickliffe (if perchance they did not get those of some other person) were thrown out, consumed by fire, and their ashes cast in a neighboring brook. “ The brook,” says Fuller,

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<sup>\*</sup> The reader will find an extended account of this Council in Milner, Cent. XV. Chap. 2. Comp. Mosheim, Cent. XV. P. II. Chap. 2, and Russell, Modern Europe, Vol. I, Let. 43.

“did convey his ashes into Avon ; Avon into Severn ; Severn into the narrow seas ; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.”

*Persecution of the Lollards.*

Having presented to the reader the instruments of clerical vengeance which were successively prepared for the punishment of the Wickliffites, we may now look over the field of carnage which they made in England.

How Wickliffe himself was harassed and hunted by his enemies, we have already seen. It was not to be expected that his disciples should fare better than their master ; and, under all the circumstances of the case, even so well. Accordingly we read, that “ Utred Bolton and John Ashwerby, fellows of Oriel college, were both much troubled and persecuted for preaching and promoting Wickliffe’s doctrine, Anno Christi, 1380.

“ John Ashton, fellow of Merton college, was persecuted and at last condemned to perpetual imprisonment for the same, Anno Christi, 1382.

“ Walter Brute of Merton college was persecuted by the bishop of Hereford, Anno Christi, 1390.

“ Peter Pateshal, who had faithfully preached this doctrine at London, and in the court, was forced by persecution to fly into Bohemia for refuge, about the same time.

“ Henry Crump, doctor of divinity in Oxford, was first an adversary to, but afterwards convinced and converted by Wickliffe’s doctrine, preached it boldly ; for which he was persecuted by the bishops, who forced him to fly into Ireland ; yet then, also, was he long imprisoned by a bishop, about the year 1392.

“ William Sawtree, a divine of Oxford, and parson of St.

Sith's church in London, was imprisoned, degraded, and at last burnt by Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, Anno Christi, 1400 [or 1401]."

Sawtree, or Sautre, was a Wickliffite, and was the pro-martyr of the English church. He was the first victim of the law of Henry IV, mentioned page 174.

"William Swinderby, of King's college in Oxford, having for a good while taught the truth at Leicester, was at last apprehended and compelled to recant; but after awhile repenting, and receiving new strength from God, he renewed his doctrine, and was burnt at Smithfield, Anno Christi, 1407.

"William Thorpe, fellow of Queen's college in Oxford, was apprehended for the same, examined, imprisoned, and there at last, secretly put to death by Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, Anno Christi, 1410."\*

Two, at least, of those mentioned by Clarke, as sufferers for their Wickliffism, were of the number of the Reformer's "poor priests,"—Thorpe and Swinderby. Several others are mentioned by Le Bas, some of whom, in the hour of peril, proved false to their principles. Multitudes, however, including priests, and nobility, and common people, both men and women, were found faithful even unto death.

The martyrologist tells us of THIRTY-NINE persons, and at their head Sir Roger Acton, who were put to death at one time, "in St. Giles's in the fields for the truth;" being "hanged with fire under them, whereby they died a double death"†—Anno Christi, 1413.

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\* Clarke's Martyrology, Chap. 55, Fol. ed.—I have taken the liberty to change the order in which the last two figures stand in Clarke: it is there 1401; it doubtless should be 1410. It ought also to be stated, that in reference to the end of Thorpe and Swinderby, some doubts have been raised.—See Le Bas, Chap. 10.

† Chap. 56.

Between the years 1414 and 1416 Clarke names about TWENTY others,—clergymen and laymen,—who were arrested, tried, imprisoned, hanged and quartered, or burnt, for their Lollardism.

*Lord Cobham.*

Among the sufferers of these times (1413—1417) no one was more distinguished than Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham. This nobleman was not less renowned for his bravery, than for his learning, his numerous virtues, and his humble piety. Henry IV. and his successor honored him with their confidence : he was also a favorite among the people. But he was a Wickliffite. “At great expense, he had collected, transcribed, and dispersed the works of Wickliffe among the common people without reserve ; and it was well known, that he maintained a great number of itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, London and Hereford.”\*

These acts of “Lollardy,” were sufficient to blast the fair fame of Oldcastle. Here was an instrument of “damnable Lollardism,” which could not be tolerated : this open patron of *heresy* must be put out of the way. There were laws enough to do this ; but the difficulty was, to turn the edge of these laws upon one so near to the king, and so high in popular favor. But archbishop Arundel was not a hound that could easily be drawn from the scent of blood. Having matured his plans in a Convocation of the clergy, he proceeded cautiously to sound the king ; and, at the same time, to infuse the poison of distrust into the monarch’s mind. He succeeded in engaging Henry to look into the

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\* Milner, Cent. XV. Chap. 1, where the reader will find a long and interesting account of this excellent nobleman.

charges against Cobham. The king undertook to convert him from his heresy ; but, as the crafty prelate doubtless anticipated, the attempt was abortive. This failure, of course, irritated and alienated the haughty monarch ; and induced him to give up his favorite to the fury of his persecutors. The archbishop immediately cited the obnoxious nobleman before him. Cobham at first refused to appear. "Arundel, in a rage, excommunicated him for contumacy, and demanded the aid of the civil power to apprehend him." Finding resistance vain, Cobham at length submitted, and appeared before his accusers for trial. Here he displayed the heroism of a knight and the humility of a Christian. "He witnessed a good confession." He feared not to profess his faith, and to defend his principles. And when, after wearisome and repeated examinations before his inquisitors, he was told—"You must either submit to the ordinances of the church, or abide the dangerous consequences." The gallant old nobleman firmly replied—"MY FAITH IS FIXED, DO WITH ME WHAT YOU PLEASE."

Sentence was immediately passed upon him ; denouncing him as "an incorrigible, pernicious, and detestable heretic," and giving him over to the tender mercies of the secular power ; or, in other words—dooming him to be hanged and burned.

This sentence, though for a time avoided by the fortunate escape of Cobham from prison, was finally executed under circumstances of revolting cruelty. His enemies accused him of traitorous designs upon his prince ; a price was set upon his head ; and after about three and a half years of flight and concealment, Cobham was discovered and arrested ; and, though both his legs had been broken in the violence of his seizure, "he was dragged into St. Giles' fields, with all the insult and barbarity of enraged supersti-

tion ; and then, both as a traitor and a heretic, he was suspended alive in chains, upon a gallows, and burned to death,"\* "with the praises of God in his mouth, and the spirit of his Savior in his heart,"\* A. D. 1417.

It is, perhaps, needless to add, that the charge of treason against lord Cobham and his associates, has but little evidence to support it. Hume, to be sure, gives full credit to it :† this, perhaps, was to be expected from a historian who is ever willing to believe any bad thing of a man of piety. Russell (*Modern Europe*, Let. 45) agrees with Hume : but his account of the matter—notwithstanding his reference to original authorities—seems little else than an abridgement of Hume's. The learned and indefatigable martyrologist, Fox, utterly repudiates this charge of treason against Cobham. So does Rapin, and Turner, and Milner, and Le Bas. Turner says : "It is all a series of surmise and rumor, of alarm and anticipation. That any plot was formed there is no evidence, and the probability is, that artful measures were taken to alarm the mind of the king into anger and cruelty, by charges of treason and rebellion and meditated assassination."‡ Milner thinks it probable that Henry himself finally discredited these charges against Oldcastle and the Lollards. The general deportment of these people gave the lie to all such accusations. They are described, says Milner, "as having been always peaceable and submissive to authority."

But, the accusations of the clergy had their designed effect : they destroyed the life of the hated nobleman, and kindled anew the flames of St. Giles' against the unfortunate followers of the "Gospel Doctor."

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\* Milner and Le Bas.

† Henry V. Chap. 19.

‡ Quoted by Le Bas, p. 367. See also Milner's *Life of Lord Cobham*.



Still "mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." About the year 1422, the archbishop of Canterbury wrote to pope Martin, "that the Wicklivists in England were grown to be so many, that they could not be suppressed without *an army*." \*

Had it been a few centuries earlier, we might have to record the bloody deeds of some Simon Montfort; and a repetition of the horrid tragedy of Beziers.† But it was too late for the *holy* vicar and his willing servants to carry on their murders on the same magnificent scale which the 12th and 13th centuries had allowed. They were compelled to slake their thirst for blood, by butchering men by *scores* instead of *thousands*. But they did "what they could."

"Between the years 1428 and 1431," says the martyr-ologist, "there were about the number of ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY men and women in Norfolk and Suffolk, brought and examined before the bishop of that diocese, for the profession of the christian faith, some of which escaped more easily, but most of them were cruelly handled, and some of them burnt."

The poor Lollards found some respite from clerical persecution during the tumultuous reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV. and V, and Richard III; a period of English history renowned for the bloody civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster—both of which aspired to the throne, and by turns attained it. These conflicting claims, by which the whole nation was divided into two great par-

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\* Clarke, Chap. 56.

† Montfort was the Popish commander of the armies of crusaders against the Albigenses. Beziers was one of their cities which was taken by storm, in which 23,000 persons, without respect to age or sex, were indiscriminately slaughtered.—See Jones's Hist. of the Christian Church, Vol. II. Chap. 5. Lond. ed.

ties, for thirty years (from 1455 to 1485), filled the kingdom with deeds of violence and crime, and deluged it in blood. The success of Henry, earl of Richmond, heir of the house of Lancaster, and the defeat and death of Richard III, on the field of Bosworth, at length terminated the bloody struggle. The conqueror ascended the throne, under the title of Henry VII; and, espousing in marriage the lady Elizabeth, heiress of the house of York, united the claims of both parties under one crown; secured undisputed possession of the throne of England, and gave peace to his harassed subjects.

This prince seems to have emulated the persecuting deeds of his ancestors, Henry IV. and V. Like them he courted the favor of the pope and his clergy, by burning the worthy followers of Wickliffe. "To the Lollards," (so were God's people nicknamed) says Fuller, "he was more cruel than his predecessors." \*

An aged priest, "so firmly rooted in the heresies of Wickliffe, that all the clerks and doctors of Canterbury were unable to remove, or even to shake him," † seems to have been the first victim of this reign. The king himself, undertook to convert him, as his namesake had lord Cobham; and though the royal disputant is said to have silenced and conquered his opponent, yet the aged man was burnt to death for his heresy.

Joanna Baughton, a widow of quality, of fourscore years of age, was another memorable victim of this reign of cruelty. "She was accused of heresy in holding many of Wickliffe's opinions. Persuasions and threats both failing to draw her from the truth, her gray hairs were given to the flames; and when she was in the flames, she cried unto

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\* Quoted by Le Bas.

† Fox, quoted by Le Bas.

God to receive her soul ; and so quietly yielded up the ghost."

Another godly confessor, one William Tylsworth, was burned to death for his heresy, in a fire which his own daughter was compelled to kindle.

Thomas Chase, after being imprisoned, and manacled, and almost starved, was "strangled and pressed to death in the prison," by order of bishop Woodbine.\*

These examples must suffice as illustrations of the demoniacal cruelty with which the followers of scriptural and primitive truth were persecuted during the reign of Henry VII. and the early part of the reign of Henry VIII.† "The extent of havoc, inflicted by this awful infatuation of the clergy and the sovereign, may be tolerably estimated, even from the somewhat sportive hyperbole of a correspondent of Erasmus ; who declares, that the frequency of executions at Smithfield had advanced the price of firewood in the neighborhood of London."‡

But the day of retribution was drawing on. The cry of the oppressed had entered the ears of the God of Sabaoth. "THE BEAST" was about to receive a deadly wound ; and from a source least anticipated. — An account of this must be reserved for another chapter.

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\* Clarke.

† Le Bas, p. 380.

‡ The reader will find in Clarke's *English Martyrology*, numerous cases of equally cruel persecution during the first twenty years of Henry 8th's reign, with those mentioned under the reign of Henry VII.

## CHAPTER X.

ERA OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION—REIGN OF HENRY VIII.  
1509--1547.

HENRY VII. died April 22d, 1509 ; and was immediately succeeded by his son Henry VIII. The joy of the people at the accession of this prince was equalled only by their satisfaction at the death of his tyrannical and miserly father.

Few monarchs have commenced their reign under auspices more favorable, or with promises more flattering. Few reigns have been more eventful to the English nation. Uniting in his own person the conflicting claims of York and Lancaster ; carefully instructed in the literature of the day ; distinguished for his dexterity in all the manly exercises of the age ; in the vigor of youth ; with a beautiful countenance, and an attractive address ; with a government firmly established by the vigorous arm of his father ; with overflowing coffers ; with a united and obedient people ; — what more could a monarch, or a nation desire of outward advantages. Yet, all these had Henry VIII, on ascending the English throne.

Soon after the settlement of the government under its new head, Henry proceeded to solemnize a marriage, which had been previously arranged by his father, with Catharine, the widow of Arthur, the late prince of Wales, Henry's eldest brother. This event, of itself so unimportant, became the occasion of an ecclesiastical revolution in England as wonderful as it has been celebrated.

The first twenty years of Henry's reign furnish few materials for our history. Lollardism, though long persecuted, still survived in the country, as "Lollard's tower," the

dungeon and the stake too fully testified. On these persecutions we need not dwell: a sufficient sample of their character has been given in the preceding chapter. The events immediately connected with the English Reformation, deserve our attention, not less for their own intrinsic importance than for their relation to, and influence upon, the subsequent history of Congregationalism.

After Henry had lived with his queen nearly twenty years, he began to question the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's widow. He consulted some of his counsellors, and found them affected with similar scruples. He then set himself to study the schoolmen, particularly his favorite, Thomas Aquinas. These researches confirmed his doubts: perhaps I ought to say, *gratified his wishes*; for, it is quite as probable that the decay of the queen's beauty, and some bodily infirmities with which she was visited, had as much to do with the movements of the king, as his conscientious scruples.

Having formed his resolution, Henry applied to the pope for a bull of divorce from Catharine, on the plea of the inconsistency of the marriage with the canons of the church and the law of God. The pope, though sufficiently inclined to gratify the English monarch, dared not to offend the emperor Charles V, the nephew of Catharine, in whose power his holiness then was.

After six years of shuffling and delay on the part of the pope, Henry's impetuosity could no longer be restrained. The violence of his natural temper had been greatly inflamed by the charms of Anne Boleyn, one of the queen's maids of honor, of noble birth, and various attractions; whom the king had resolved to raise to his throne. But this he could not do, without removing Catharine. Her virtuous and exemplary life gave him no ground of accusa-

tion against her ; and his only hope was a divorce, on the alleged unlawfulness of the original union. Finding it vain to look to Rome for help, Henry was advised, by Dr. Cranmer of Cambridge, to apply to the universities of England, and Europe generally, for a solution of the questions—“ Whether it was agreeable to the law of God for a man to marry his brother’s wife ?” and “ Whether the pope could dispense with the law of God ?” “ All the universities, and most of the learned men of Europe, both Lutherans and Papists, except those at Rome, declared for the *negative* of the two questions.” \*

The opinion of these learned men was then laid before the parliament and the convocation of clergy. These assemblies obediently concurred with the opinion of their master and that of the universities. These points settled, Henry no longer delayed. Anne Boleyn was immediately married privately to the king, Nov. 14, 1532,† and Catharine of Arragon soon after (May 20, 1533) solemnly divorced, by the decree of Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury. These acts may be regarded as the first capital stroke towards the English Reformation.

Upon hearing of these transactions, the pope and his conclave were filled with rage ; and denounced excommunication against the impious king. Henry, however, was prepared for the thunder-gust. Having gradually prepared the public mind for the announcement, he caused publicly to be preached—“ That the pope was entitled to no authority

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\* Neal’s Puritans, Vol. 1. p. 57. Edition of 5 vols. 8vo. Hume says: “ Oxford alone and Cambridge made some difficulty.”—Henry VIII. Chap. 30.

† Cranmer has been accused of solemnizing this marriage. But this, the archbishop distinctly denied. He says: “ *I myself knew not thereof a fortnight after it was done.*”—See his Letter to Haw-

at all beyond the bounds of his own diocese.” \* By an act of parliament it was further declared—“that to speak against the pope was no heresy ;” \* the power of appointing bishops was vested in the king ; the payment of first-fruits to the pope was abolished ; the king was empowered to call convocations of the clergy ; was made the ultimate appeal in causes ecclesiastical ; and finally, declared to be “SOLE AND SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, NEXT AND IMMEDIATELY UNDER CHRIST.”† Bold steps indeed for that age. And, what is truly astonishing, Henry had sufficient power to extort these concessions from the convocation of the clergy, as well as from the parliament. And what is yet more astonishing, the same arbitrary power compelled the *monks* themselves—the very *elite* of the papal hosts—to renounce their allegiance to their sovereign lord the pope, “uno ore et voce, atque unanimi omnium et singulorum consensu et assensu”—with one mouth and voice, and with the unanimous consent and assent of all and each individual ‡

This was *clipping the wings of the pope* with a vengeance. “Here was the rise of the Reformation,” says Mr. Neal. The “ACT OF SUPREMACY” by which Henry was made head of the Church of England, was a complete overthrow of the Romish power in that nation. Instead of Clement VII, Henry VIII. became virtually pope of England. In him was vested all power to correct and reform, alter and amend whatsoever seemed needful in his infallible judg-

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kins, quoted from Strype, by bishop Burnet, Hist. Ref. Rec. Vol. V. B. II. P. III. p. 103.

\* Hume. † Neal, Vol. I. p. 59.

‡ See “Renunciation of the Pope’s Supremacy ; signed by the Heads of Six Religious Houses,” in Burnet’s History of the Reformation, Vol. II. Book II. No. 50 of Records.

ment. This mighty power, the despot wielded during the remainder of his reign, for good or evil, as his interest, caprice, or passion directed. Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, a man of learning, and probity, and judgment, and, we may hope, sincere piety; and Cromwell, secretary of state, and afterwards vicegerent of the king, were Henry's chief counsellors. Both of these men had embraced the principles of the Reformation; and, covertly or openly, did what they could to stimulate the king to a thorough reform of the Church of England.

The reformatory measures of the court,—such as they were—found countenance and support in multitudes of the common people, and not a few of the clergy.

The Lollards, though so long the objects of persecution, were still quite numerous in the nation. The progress of the Lutheran Reformation, on the continent, had now (1533—1535) made great progress. The writings of the continental Reformers had found their way to England, and had been eagerly read; especially by the admirers of Wickliffe. These writings had enkindled the hopes of the persecuted Lollards, and fired anew their zeal; and had, indeed, made many converts among all classes of society. But, that which did most, perhaps, to prepare the minds of the people to acquiesce in the overthrow of popery, was the circulation of Tindal's translation of the Scriptures; which "had a wonderful spread among the people."\*

This book, the favorers of popery endeavored in vain to suppress. They bought up copies and burned them. But, this only furnished poor Tindal with the means of publishing another and more correct edition. So eager had the people become for the Word of God, that the king thought

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\* Neal, Vol. I. p. 67; Hume, Henry VIII. Chap. 31.



proper to have the Bible translated, set up in all the churches, and allowed freely to all the people. Tindal's Bible—though he himself had perished as a heretic—was revised by Cranmer, and published by the authority of the king and the convocation ; “ and eagerly read by all sorts of people.”\*

The entire reign of Henry VIII, extending from 1509 to 1547, a period of thirty-seven years and nine months—was an exhibition of depotism and caprice on his part, and of servility and suppleness on the part of parliament and the mass of the clergy. The English parliament was indeed the grand instrument of Henry's tyranny. This he often convened, and commanded to do his pleasure ; and it seldom failed to obey ; except, perhaps, in the matter of pecuniary grants. One might almost believe that parliament would have voted, if the despot had required it—that the souls and bodies of the English people were, and of right should be, the obedient slaves of his *Highness*—the head of church and state. Or, that the people of England had neither souls nor bodies, being all absorbed and included in the soul and body of their sovereign lord the king.

With such a master, and such slaves to do his bidding, we ought not to expect to find anything like a consistent and onward progress in the reformation of the English church.

Henry's own faith was the only standard allowed in the nation ; and this he changed as often as he did his wives.† His creed was partly Popish, and partly Protestant. The Bible which he set up in all the churches, and commended

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\* Neal, Vol. I. p. 67, 68 ; Hume, Vol. II. Chaps. 31, 32. pp. 362, 375, 377, 406, Albany Edition.

† Two of whom he beheaded ; two he divorced ; one died a natural death, much to his sorrow ; and one outlived him.

to all the people at one time, he pulled down and forbade the people at another. He persecuted, imprisoned, and burned to death both Papists and Protestants ; sometimes consuming them in the same fire. Such is a miniature portrait of Henry VIII, and his eventful reign.

*Ecclesiastical opinions of the Reformers.*

Having considered briefly and generally the circumstances and peculiarities of the Reformation, which commenced in Henry's reign, we will now turn our attention to the ecclesiastical opinions of the Reformers, so far as these opinions come within the legitimate range of our inquiries. This examination is the more important, because it was during this reign that the foundations were laid of the present church of England. It is under the "Act of Supremacy," that the successive kings and queens of England have assumed to be heads of the English church ; and it was under the operations of this supremacy, that our Congregational fathers suffered most severely.

The following are the principal doctrines of the Reformers, so far as I have discovered, which savor of Congregationalism.

1. *The Scriptures* were distinctly recognized as the rule of faith ; and of church order, so far at least, that nothing *contrary* to them should be enforced.

In the "Articles about Religion," drawn up by Henry, and passed in convocation, 1536, all bishops and preachers are directed to instruct and teach the people—"that they ought, and must, most constantly believe and defend all those things to be true, which are comprehended in the whole canon of the Bible, and also in the three Creeds," viz. The Apostles', the Nicene and Athanasian.\*

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\* Burnet, His. Ref. Vol. II. Addenda, No. 1 ; Neal, Vol. I. p. 69.

Here, to be sure, there is no recognition of the right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures; for all men are strictly enjoined to understand them by the light of these three earliest and purest creeds;—still, there is a distinct recognition of the complete authority of the Scriptures.

The publication of the Bible in the English tongue, by royal authority; the setting up of a large Bible in every church;\* and the requisition that the clergy should read one or more chapters in connection with public worship; the declaration of the king,—“In God’s name, let it go abroad among my people,”—show conclusively, that those who had the direction of affairs, designed to make the Bible the standard of truth; so far as they had any standard, independent of the king’s own pleasure.

This further appears from the fact, that the king and his counsellors, in their inquiries of the bishops touching their proposed reformatory measures, constantly appealed to the Scriptures for proof; and this, not alone in reference to points confessedly essential to salvation, but also upon points of order and ceremony in the church. This appears very clearly in the questions proposed to the bishops and doctors “concerning the sacraments;” as,—“What a sacrament is *by the Scripture?*” “How many there be *by the Scripture?*” \* \* “Whether Confirmation, cum Chrismate, [i. e. accompanied with anointing, \* \* ] *be found in Scrip-*

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\* A curious proclamation requiring “the Curates and Parishioners of every Town and Parish” \* \* “to buy and provide Bibles of the largest and greatest Volume, and cause the same to be set and fixed in every of the said Parish Churches,” and also regulating the price of Bibles, and giving directions how they should be used, etc.—may be found in Burnet’s Coll. of Records, Vol. II. Book III. No. 24. pp. 364—366.

ture?" "Whether a Bishop hath authority to make a Priest *by the Scripture, or No ?*" etc.\*

Fuller and Burnet inform us, that lord Cromwell, sitting as vicar-general, or king's representative, in the convocation of June 9th, 1536, declared that "it was the king's pleasure, that the rites and ceremonies of the church should be reformed by *the rules of Scripture, and that nothing was to be maintained which did not rest upon that authority.*"†

It may seem a trifling matter to dwell upon,—that the Reformers of Henry's day recognized the Scriptures as the end of controversy; but, he who calls to mind the fact, that in those days the ecclesiastical laws of Christendom recognized "all the decrees of the bishop of Rome \* \* as God's Word, spoken by the mouth of Peter,"‡—will perceive, at once, that to reject the pope's authority, and to appeal to the Scriptures, upon any point of order which his holiness had settled, was the boldest heresy.

The opinions of the Reformers upon this subject, appear yet more evident, perhaps, from the fact, that they made a distinction between the religious doctrines of the Scriptures, "which be commanded of God, and are necessary to our salvation," and the order and ceremonies of the church; which they termed,—"*the honest ceremonies, and good and politick order;*" or "certain honest and commendable ceremonies, rites, and usages in our said church, for an honest policy and decent order."§

These rites and ceremonies, and this "good and politick

\* See Burnet's Coll. Vol. II. Book III. No. 21. pp. 294—356.

† Prince's New Eng. Chronology, Sect. II. p. 233.

‡ "A Collection of Passages out of the Canon Law, made by Cranmer, to show the necessity of reforming it."—Burnet, Vol. II. Book III. No. 27. p. 376.

§ Burnet, ut sup. Addenda, No. I. pp. 440—456.

order," they allowed not to be at all essential to salvation; because not enjoined in the Scriptures. And for the same reason, they admitted that the outward form and order of the church might be changed and modified by the reigning powers. The *jure divino*, or divine right of Episcopacy was not then taught,—had not then been discovered. The king required his archbishops and bishops, "in their own persons," to "set forth to the people the Word of God sincerely and purely; declaring the difference between the *things commanded by God*, and *these rites and ceremonies* commanded only by a lower authority."\*

Respecting these rites and ceremonies, instituted by men either for the sake of the beauty, or the order, or the discipline of the church, the Reformers maintained, that they were by no means necessarily the same in all places: but subject to change, and adaptation to the peculiar manners and customs of different regions; provided they were not inconsistent with God's Word—"ut sint consentientes Verbo Dei."†

2. *Two orders of the clergy* were all that the Reformers admitted to be divine.

In 1536 a little work was published, called the "*Institution of a Christian man*;" or, the "Bishop's Book;" "recommended, and subscribed, by the two archbishops, nineteen bishops, and by the lower house of convocation."

In this book it is maintained—that there are "*but two orders of the clergy*; and, *that no one bishop has authority over another, according to the word of God.*"

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\* Burnet's His. Ref. Vol. V. p. 201.—I quote from the London Edition of 1820, in 6 Vols. 8vo.

† See "A definition of the Church, corrected in the margin by King Henry's own hand."—Burnet, Vol. II. Addenda. No. 12. p. 526.

Near the close of Henry's reign, in 1543, another book was published, called the "*The King's Book*;" or, "A Necessary Erudition for a Christian man." This was drawn up by a committee of bishops and divines. It taught—that there is "*no real distinction between bishops and priests.*"

Of deacons, it says: "Their office in the primitive church, was partly to minister meat and drink, and other necessities to the poor, and partly, to minister to the bishops and priests." Then follows this remarkable passage: "OF THESE TWO ORDERS ONLY, THAT IS TO SAY, PRIESTS AND DEACONS, SCRIPTURE MAKETH EXPRESS MENTION, and how they were conferred of the apostles, by prayer and imposition of hands; but, the primitive church afterwards appointed inferior degrees, as sub-deacons, acolytes, exorcists, etc.: but lest peradventure it might be thought by some, that such authorities, powers and jurisdictions, as patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and metropolitans now have, or heretofore at any time have had justly and lawfully over other bishops, were given them by God in the Holy Scriptures, we think it expedient and necessary, that all men should be advertised and taught, that all such lawful power and authority of any one bishop over another, were, and be given them by the consent, ordinances, and positive laws of man, only, and not by any ordinance of God in Holy Scripture; *and all such power, and authority, which any bishop has had over another, which has not been given him by such consent and ordinance of men, is, in very deed, no lawful power, but plain usurpation and tyranny.*"\*

This book contained, as did its predecessor, the Bishop's

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\* Neal's His. Puritans, Vol. I. pp. 81, 82, note.—Calamy's Defence, Vol. I. pp. 90, 91.

Book, much that savored of despotism, and somewhat of religious error; still, the reader will not fail to notice the effects of "*Wicleue learning*," as a knowledge of the Scriptures was called. Here are sentiments approaching very nearly to those of modern Congregationalists. But, how shall we account for these *phenomena* of that dark age? Simply by reference to the facts adduced under the preceding section;—that the Scriptures were made the standard of truth.

The same sentiments are asserted in several other documents of that age; as, in "A Declaration made of the Functions and Divine Institution of Bishops and [or] Priests;" where it is said: "the truth is, that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinction in orders, but only of deacons or ministers, and of priests or bishops; nor is there any word spoken of any other ceremony used in the conferring of this sacrament, but only of prayer, and the imposition of the bishop's hands."

This document is subscribed by more than thirty-seven dignitaries,—archbishops, bishops, professors of theology, and of civil and ecclesiastical law.\*

In another document, already referred to (page 194), the archbishop of Canterbury, in answer to the question,

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\* See Burnet, Vol. II. Addenda, No. 5. pp. 463—467.—The doctrine, that bishops were a superior order, (*jure divino*) was a novelty in the church of England, nearly fifty years later than this. Dr. John Reynolds, an Episcopal divine, "who," Calamy says, "was universally reckoned the wonder of his age,"—asserted in 1588, "that they who for these *five hundred years*, have been industrious in reforming the church, have thought that *all pastors, whether called bishops or presbyters, have, according to the word of God, like power and authority*."—Defence of Non Conformity, Vol. I. pp. 87—89. Neal's Pur. Vol. I. pp. 480—483, contains a long letter from Dr. Reynolds upon this subject.

“Whether bishops or priests were first?” says: “The bishops and priests were at one time, and were no two things, *but both one office in the beginning of Christ’s religion.*” \* The same opinion, for substance, was expressed by other bishops and doctors to whom the question was proposed: † “The apostles made bothe Bishops and Prestes: *The Names whereof in the Scripture be confounded.*” ‡

3. Respecting the rights of the people to choose their own pastors, and to exercise discipline, the Reformers held the following language: “In the apostle’s time, when there was no Christian princes, by whose authority ministers of God’s Word might be appointed, nor sins by the sword corrected, there was no remedy then for the correction of vice, or appointing of ministers, but only the consent of Christian multitudes among themselves, by an uniform consent, to follow the advice and persuasion of such persons whom God had most endowed with the spirit of counsel and wisdom. \* \* Sometimes the apostles and others, unto whom God had given abundantly his Spirit, sent or appointed ministers of God’s word; sometimes the people did choose

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\* See Burnet, Vol. II. pp. 326—329.

† See the answer of the bishop of London, and of Dr. Cox, and of Dr. Day; the last of whom says: “In the beginning of the church, as well that word “*Episcopus* as *Presbyter*, was common and attributed both to bishops and priests.”

‡ See Burnet, Vol. VI. Coll. Rec. No. 70. Ques 10. In the 69th No. the reader may find the same answers, in substance, with Henry’s remarks in the margin; from which it is evident, that he doubted the scriptural authority for Episcopal confirmation. And upon the question, “whether any other but only a bishop may make a priest?” Henry proposes a query, which must have been rather embarrassing to their reverences,—to wit: Since you confess that the prince has authority to *appoint* bishops, “how can you prove that ordering [or ordaining] is only committed to you bishops?”



such, as they thought meet thereunto ; and when any were appointed or sent by the apostles or others, the people of their own voluntary will with thanks did accept them ; not for the supremity, empire, or dominion, that the apostles had over them to command, as their princes, and masters, but as good people ready to obey the advice of good counsellors, and to accept anything that was necessary for their edification and benefit."

Thus spake his grace of Canterbury. Verily one might almost suspect his lordship of being one of those *gainsayers* of a later period, to whom Wickliffe has been compared. But, we have not yet seen the end of my lord primate's "*crude assumptions*."\*

In his answer to the question, "Whether any other but only a bishop may make a priest?" he is so bold as to assert, that even a Christian people may make their own bishops or priests by election ; but the reader shall see Cranmer's own words : "A bishop may make a priest by the Scripture, and so may princes and governors also, and that by the authority of God committed to them, *and the people also by their election* ; for as we read that bishops have done it, so Christian emperors and princes usually have done it, and *the people before Christian princes were, commonly did elect their bishops and priests*."†

And, in answer to another question, the archbishop goes yet further ; and declares, that even any consecration, further than an "election or appointing" to the office is unnecessary. His words are : "In the New Testament, he

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\* See Mr. Taylor's learned, and not very *un-pretending* work—"Ancient Christianity," p. 33. Am. Ed.—where he speaks of the "crude assumptions on which the modern Congregational system rests."

† Burnet, Vol. II. Book III. p. 330.

that is appointed to be a bishop, or priest, needeth no consecration by the Scripture, *for election, or appointing thereto, is sufficient.*"\*

Such appear to have been the opinions of the celebrated Cranmer, archbishop<sup>o</sup> of Canterbury during the whole period of the Reformation, and the very spring and life of the whole movement, so far as it was a religious reformation. It is true, that Cranmer was ahead of most of the divines of his day in the boldness and scriptural character of many of his opinions; yet, it is evident from an examination of this list of questions and answers, occupying over sixty octavo pages, that there were others among the bishops and doctors who were not far behind the archbishop; and indeed, upon some points, even out-ran him.

Dr. Leyghon asserts, that *the power of the keys resides chiefly in the Church*—"potestas clavium residet praeipue in Ecclesia."† And, in another place he says: "That not only bishops and priests may excommunicate, but any other man appointed by the church, or such as have authority to appoint men to that office may excommunicate.‡

Dr. Coren asserted, that "forasmuch as the keys be given to the whole church, *the whole congregation may excommunicate*, which excommunication may be pronounced by such an one as the congregation does appoint, although he be neither Bishop or Priest."§

Dr. Oglethorp agreed with Dr. Coren. He says: "Non solum Episcopus Excommunicare potest, sed etiam tota Congregatio,"—not only may a bishop excommunicate, but also the whole congregation; that is, for deadly and public crimes, by which scandal is brought upon the church. Not

\* Burnet, Vol. II. Book III. p. 333.

† Ut sup. p. 440.

‡ Ibid, p. 351.

§ Ibid. pp. 351, 532.

however, on account of pecuniary matters (re pecuniaria) as was formerly customary.\*

I have now mentioned what seems to be most worthy of notice in the ecclesiastical opinions of those who commenced what is called "The English Reformation," so far as these opinions fall in with the design of this history.

No one, I presume, will suppose the writer simple enough to believe that Henry VIII, or Thomas Cranmer, or vicegerent Cromwell, had any intention of reducing the English hierarchy to the simplicity of Congregational churches. Far from this. These men were *Erastians*; they believed, that the outward order of the church might, and ought to be regulated by the prince or the magistrates of every Christian country, as seemed best suited to the circumstances and peculiarities of that country. This certainly was Cranmer's belief; and so fully did he act up to it, that he took his archiepiscopal office, subject to the king's pleasure; and at the decease of Henry, he resigned his office, and declined acting any longer as archbishop of Canterbury until re-appointed by the new government.

Cranmer, and those who acted with him in this, and the succeeding reign, were emphatically the fathers of the English church. Their ecclesiastical opinions are, therefore, worthy of very special regard, as presenting a striking contrast with the opinions afterwards broached, and still insisted upon by those occupying the seats of the Reformers. One can hardly avoid feeling, that those "wise men of Gotham"—wise above what is written—who praise so highly the Reformers of their church, and condemn so roundly the *crudities* of Congregationalism—would do well to remember, that the first archbishop of Canterbury in the Reformed Church of England, and some of the most learned doctors

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\* Ut sup. p. 350.

of his day, believed in several of the very "crude assumptions" of modern Congregationalists.\*

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## CHAPTER XI.

REIGN OF EDWARD VI, 1546.—THE REFORMATION ENDED,  
1553.—POPERY RESTORED.

The reign of Edward VI. was an interesting and memorable period of English history. He was the only son of Henry VIII. by his favorite queen, Jane Seymour. At the

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\* I am tempted to introduce here—a short extract from the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas Moore, vice-chancellor of England, and one of the most learned and remarkable men of Henry's reign. Sir Thomas was a good Catholic;—some have called him a bigoted one.—Be this as it may, he died in defence of the pope's supremacy.

His *Utopia* is a vision of his imagination, in which he probably embodied his fullest conceptions of a perfect government in church and state. In this work he represents the Utopians on receiving Christianity, as inclined, and resolved to *choose priests* that should officiate among them, since they would not have any that were regularly ordained."—"He proposes no subjection of their priests to any head." Here we have the equality of all preachers.—"He makes them to be chosen by the people and consecrated by the college of priests; and he gives them no other authority but that of excluding men that were desperately wicked from joining in their worship, which was short and simple." \* \* Now these expressions, though found in a work purely imaginative, are well worthy the notice of the reader, as shadowing forth the conceptions of one of the wisest and most moderate men among the papists of the fifteenth century, upon the subject of church order, etc.—I quote from bishop Burnet's *His. Ref.* Vol. V. pp. 44, 45.

death of his father, Edward was only nine years and four months old ; but was a youth of much loveliness, great promise, and uncommon intelligence. Henry had carefully arranged a plan of government to continue during his son's minority ; vainly hoping to reign by his *Will* when he himself was no more. For this purpose he appointed sixteen executors, to be regents of the kingdom until Edward was eighteen years old : these were to be assisted by twelve counsellors, whom he also named.

If Henry forgot, that he should cease to be king when he ceased to live ; and that when he ceased to be king he would neither be feared nor obeyed, his subjects did not. One of the first acts of these executors and counsellors, on assuming the government of the kingdom, was to depart from the late king's will, by appointing one of their number to be PROTECTOR, who should represent the king, be encircled with the " exterior symbols of royal dignity,\* and be at the head of the government, though without authority to act independently of his coadjutors, the executors and counsellors. Their choice fell on the earl of Hertford, afterwards created Duke of Somerset, Edward's maternal uncle.

Henry, it would seem, sought to give to the new government the prominent characteristics of his own. Accordingly, the administrators of it were in part Reformers and in part Papists : the former, however, had the ascendancy. At their head was the young king ; who was carefully instructed in the principles of the Reformation, by his tutor, Dr. Cox. The Protector was also a patron of the Reformation. Next to him stood Cranmer, the moving spirit of reform under the late king ; the archbishop of York was on the same side ; so were the secretary of state, and

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\* Hume.

the lord admiral ; and the bishops of Lincoln, and Ely, and Worcester, and Rochester ; the last two being Latimer and Ridley, so famous in after history.

On the side of Popery were the princess lady Mary, the next heir to the crown ; the lord chancellor ; Tonstal, bishop of Durham ; Gardiner, bishop of Winchester ; and Bonner, bishop of London.

The Reformers having the power in their hands, began immediately to relax the oppressive laws of the late reign. Persecution was stopped, and the prisoners for conscience sake, set free : several exiles, as Coverdale, Hooper, and Rogers, with others, returned from Germany. These men had imbibed much more of the spirit of reform, by their familiarity with the continental Reformers, than Henry had allowed in his prelates ; and began immediately on their return to give utterance to their deep abhorrence of the remaining abominations of Popery in the English church. They preached boldly against images in the churches ; against masses for the dead ; and other superstitious funeral services. Their labors awoke the nation to the necessity of further reformation. The government proceeded gradually to correct various abuses. They first removed from the churches such images as had been the objects of idolatrous veneration ; and finally, *all* images and pictures. The clergy were instructed to preach against pilgrimages, and praying to images ; and were directed to correct various other superstitions among the people. The new administration next obtained from the parliament, the repeal of the persecuting laws which had been in force during the late reign ; particularly “ two of the statutes against *Lollardies*.\*

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\* Neal. — Hume says : “ *all* the former laws against Lollardy or heresy.” — Ed. VI. Chap. 34.

Several learned foreign reformers were invited over to England, and settled in the universities and elsewhere ; as the celebrated Peter Martyr, who was appointed to the divinity chair at Oxford ; and Bucer, who was made professor of divinity in Cambridge.

The Reformers next set themselves to correct the forms of public worship, and to draw up a Liturgy, or formulary of public devotions, embracing the principles to which they had then arrived, or, which they thought fit to publish ; and finally to set forth articles of faith. The Common Prayer Book sent forth by them was a piece of Mosaic-work, formed, chiefly, out of several Popish books of devotion, etc. ; translated into English, and published in the king's name.\* This was confirmed by an act of parliament ; and severe penalties were connected with any deviation from this order of public worship ; it was even made penal to write or print against this book. In all these measures of reformation, neither the people nor the clergy were consulted. The council seem to have caught the mantle of the late king, and to have followed up the plan which he so long had pursued. They acted as the supreme authority ; and indeed, as the only authority in the kingdom. And, by so

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\* Neal, Vol. I. p. 95, 96. — Calderwood, in his Church History says : "The Common Prayer is little less than a translation of several parcels put together, of the Roman Breviary, Missal, and Ritual." He mentions *six* canticles in the C. P. which are word for word from the Mass Book.

"When the Devonshire men were stirred up to rebellion on account of the alteration of their Mass Book, king Edward VI. tells them, in a letter, to quiet them : 'As for the service in the English tongue, it perchance seems to you a *new* service, but yet indeed *it is no other but the old—the self-same words in English.*'" — De-laune's Plea, pp. 47, 52.

doing, they had the misfortune to satisfy fully neither the Protestants nor the Papists. For the most devoted of the former, the Reformers were too timid and temporizing; while the latter, were indignant at the audacity of men who, in the minority of their present king, presumed to disregard the model set up by their late wise and learned monarch. Men of very opposite opinions have praised the English Reformation, for the moderation and prudence with which it was conducted. That it was an improvement on the Popery of preceding ages, no one can doubt; but, that it was anything better than a *reformed* Popery, after all, it will be difficult to prove. The grand principle on which the work was carried forward, was the very principle of Popery—the right of a few to command the multitude. Henry VIII. was as much pope of England, as his holiness was of Rome: and the government of Edward VI. assumed the same infallible authority, to make a faith and ecclesiastical polity for the people, without consulting the people through their representatives in parliament; or the clergy in convocation. These bodies—particularly the former—were called upon *to sanction* the doings of the council: and so were they to sanction the tyranny of Henry VIII.; but they acted not as free agents in either case.

The rights of private judgment were not regarded by the Reformers. Uniformity in faith, and in worship, and in non-essential rites and observances, was enforced. It is true, most of the persecuting statutes of preceding reigns were repealed; but, a heretic was still liable to death by the common law; and if so, what material point was gained? Would the fire kindled by *statute* law, burn more fiercely than that which was lighted up by the *common* law? The cap and surplice were as much insisted on, as any article of faith. The godly Hooper was compelled to be a bishop,



notwithstanding his remonstrances ; and was sent a prisoner to the Fleet for refusing to be consecrated in the popish habits of the priesthood. Hooper, with others of the most devoted reformers, was for shaking off entirely the shreds of Popery ; he was willing to be a bishop, if that was his sovereign's pleasure, and to be clothed in a suitable garment, to designate him from the laity ; he, however, strenuously objected to the old Popish dresses, which had been venerated by the people as essential to the right and effectual performance of clerical duties. But *the Reformers*—technically so called—insisted that every jot and tittle of their ecclesiastical laws, relating to rites and ceremonies, as well as to religious faith, should be strictly observed : affirming, that, “in matters of rites and ceremonies, *custom* was a good argument for the continuance of those that had been long used.” \* This has ever been a favorite argument with the friends of the English hierarchy : but, if it proves anything it proves too much. If antiquity sanctions the cap and surplice, why does it not also the gloves, the sandals, the mitre, the ring and crosier, which the Reformers laid aside ? And not these things merely, but much more important matters besides. The recent movements among the antiquity-party in the English church clearly demonstrate the danger of this rule insisted on by the Reformers. For surely, if this argument is good for a *part* of the rites and ceremonies of the ancient church, it is equally good for *all*. If *some* of the relics of Popery may be venerated for their antiquity, all may, which have the same recommendation ; and if so, the Reformation, so far as the order and ceremonies of the church were concerned, was an unwarrantable revolution ; and the bitter Churchman, Heylin, was not so far astray, when he declared the reign of Edward “un-

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\* Neal, I. p. 111.

fortunate ; and that his death was not an infelicity to the church.”\* The Reformers were doubtless prudent and cautious in their movements ; but, it is painfully evident that—good men as they were—much of their prudence and caution was *worldly* and *political*, rather than such as cometh down from above. Instead of cutting loose at once from the rotten carcase of Popery, and taking the apostolic churches as their model, and throwing before the nation the New Testament as the statute book of the Church,—they adopted as much of Popery as their consciences would allow, and mixed as much of truth with it as they thought the nation would bear, and the interests of the crown would admit. They pulled down Roman Papacy, and employed the massive and venerable ruins in erecting English Episcopacy. They cut off the Pope’s head from the English Church, and put on the king’s, instead of it ; and if the legs of their image were iron, its feet were, at best, but “ part of iron and part of clay ;” the very foundation on which it was made to stand, was then, and is now, liable to be smitten by the stone “ cut out without hands,” and to be broken in pieces.

It is not my intention to go into further details respecting the English Reformation. What has been said, seemed necessary to assist the reader to understand the history of after ages. The Reformers were wise and good men, and deserve to be had in lasting remembrance for what they did to emancipate the kingdom from the slavery of Romanism. Still, few Protestants will maintain, that it was not a material error in these fathers of the Church of England, to insist upon entire uniformity ; and to persecute even their reforming brethren for refusing to conform to non-essential rites and ceremonies. It is to this reign—about the year

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\* Neal, 1. p. 123.

1550—that the origin of *Nonconformists* is traced ; and bishop Hooper may be regarded as the father of this new sect—if such we may call them—who afterwards made so considerable a figure in English history.\*

After what has been said of the errors of the Reformers, it is but an act of justice to their memory to add—that they would have gone further in their reformatory labors had they deemed it safe so to do. The insurrections which occurred in connection with their movements, made them fear to carry out their full convictions. Some things were retained at the Reformation, as bishop Burnet tells us—“to draw the people more entirely into it.” Other things were received, or rather *tolerated*, as bishop Grindall and Horn tell us, “till the Lord shall grant better times.” And bishop Jewell said : “I wish that all, even the minutest relics of Popery, could be removed, both out of the churches, and much more out of the minds of men.”† These sentiments were uttered in 1566—67, a period somewhat later than that now under consideration, but by men who breathed much of the spirit of the Reformers of Edward’s reign.

That king Edward was of the same mind appears from the writings of John a Lasco, a noble Polander—the learned and pious superintendent of all the foreign churches in London during Edward’s time. In a work published in 1555, he says : “King Edward desired that the rites and ceremonies used under Popery, should be purged out by de-

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\* I say *Nonconformists*, rather than *Puritans*, because Puritanism was a higher degree of nonconformity ; and it is desirable to mark the progress of reformation—First, Nonconformity ; next, Puritanism ; and finally, Separation. The first, to be sure, had the gerin of both the others. Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and others then in power, finally came fully into Hooper’s sentiments respecting the Popish habits.

† See Burnet, Vol. III. Coll. Rec. Book 6.

grees; that it was his pleasure that strangers should have churches to perform all things according to apostolical observation only, that by this means the English churches might be excited to embrace apostolical purity with the unanimous consent of the states of the kingdom.”\*

Mr. Neal says of the Reformers of this reign,—“that they were not satisfied with the present discipline of the church.”† Edward himself is said to have lamented that the times did not allow him to restore the *primitive discipline* of the church, according to his heart’s desire.

Dr. Cox, the king’s tutor, wrote to the learned Bullinger, of Zurich, Switzerland, in 1550: “I think all things in the church ought to be pure and simple, removed at the greatest distance from the pomps and elements of this world. But, in this our church, what can I do in so low a station? I can only endeavor to persuade our bishops to be of the same mind with myself. This, I wish truly, and I commit to God the care and conduct of his own work.”‡

A further evidence of the intentions of the Reformers, appears from what is said in the preface of one of their service books, to this purpose: “that they had gone as far as they could in reforming the church, considering the times they lived in, and hoped they that came after them would, as they might, do more.”§

Mr. Neal tells us, on the authority of Bullinger, that archbishop Cranmer was not satisfied with the liturgy “though it had been twice reformed.”||

From the above extracts it appears, that the Reformers—at least the more zealous among them—had no thought that they had completed their work. Acting upon the princi-

\* Neal, Vol. I. p. 121.

† Ib. pp. 121—124.

‡ Burnet, Vol. V. p. 296.

§ Neal, Vol. I. p. 121.

|| Vol. I. p. 122, 123.

ples which they had embraced, and surrounded with the difficulties of those days, they did what they thought they could; leaving it in trust to those who should come after them, to finish, as they might, had they been disposed, the work so well begun. How fully this trust was fulfilled, has already been intimated, and will appear yet more fully in the sequel.

Mr. Neal gives the following summary of the principles and doctrines of the Reformers of Edward's reign.

“1. That in matters of faith the first Reformers followed the doctrine of St. Austin, [Augustine,] in the controverted points of original sin, predestination, justification by faith alone, effectual grace, and good works.

2. That they were not satisfied with the present discipline of the church, though they thought they might submit to it, till it should be amended by the authority of the legislature.

3. That they believed but two orders of churchmen in Holy Scripture, namely, bishops and deacons; and consequently, that bishops and priests were but different ranks or degrees of the same order.

4. That they gave the right hand of fellowship to foreign churches, and ministers that had not been ordained by bishops; there being no dispute about re-ordination in order to any church preferment, till the latter end of queen Elizabeth's reign.

*In all which points most of our modern churchmen have departed from them.”\**

But, the Reformation was soon terminated, by the untimely and possibly, *violent* death † of the amiable, learned,

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\* Vol. I. Chap. 2. pp. 123, 124. See also, pp. 106 and 120.

† Neal says: “It was more than whispered that he was poisoned.”—Vol. I. p. 123.

and devout young prince, Edward VI. He died, apparently of consumption, on the 6th of July, 1553; in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign.

Before the decease of the young monarch, an attempt was made to fix the succession upon the amiable and accomplished lady Jane Grey. An attempt which proved as unfortunate to that beautiful lady, as it was unauthorized and illegal. It brought her fair head to the block. The inscrutable providence of God had decreed that England should be ruled for a season, by the counsellors of that incarnation of all that was odious—*Mary*. After a brief review of her reign, we shall be prepared to enter upon the more important and interesting periods of English history, when the scattered elements of Congregational belief were gathered together, embodied and professed by distinct churches, which maintained their scriptural rights at the sacrifice of every earthly comfort—yea, of life itself.

### *Accession of Mary, 1553.*

Mary was the eldest daughter of Henry VIII. and his first queen, Catharine of Arragon. Mary and her sister Elizabeth had both, in turn, been declared illegitimate, and their title to the throne set aside by their capricious father; and these acts had been confirmed by his obedient parliaments.

Henry, nevertheless, in perfect consistency with his unparalleled inconsistency, finally settled the succession upon them in case of Edward's decease, and failure of issue.

It was the apprehended consequences of Mary's reign, who had shown herself a determined papist, which induced the young king to set her aside, and fix upon the lady Jane, who stood next to Henry's own daughters in the line of succession. This act was, however, so manifestly illegal,

that some of the most zealous of the Reformers refused to countenance it, though they foresaw the disastrous consequences of Mary's accession. Under these circumstances, we need not wonder that she found little difficulty in vindicating her claim, and making her way to the English throne.

But this she did not accomplish before she had solemnly promised—"that no innovation should be made of religion."\* On these conditions, "The Suffolk men," who, as Fox tells us, "being always foward in promoting the proceedings of the Gospel, promised her their aid and help."

One of her first acts on getting possession of the Tower was to modify this promise to "the Suffolk men," by saying, she meant not "to *compel* or *strain* other people's consciences." A few days afterwards, feeling herself more secure on the throne, she still further explained herself by saying—"the subjects were not to be compelled *until public order should be taken for it.*"†

The Reformers soon began to experience the workings of their own principles of action, wielded by a Popish government. The right of the prince to make and establish a religion for the nation, though in words denied by Mary, began immediately to be exercised. Before any of the laws, of the late reign establishing the order of faith and worship in the nation had been repealed, the queen issued her proclamations forbidding all preaching without her special license; or, in plain terms—silencing all the Protestants of the kingdom.

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\* Fox's Acts and Monuments, Vol. III. p. 12, Fol. Ed. 1684.

† Burnet, Vol. V. Book V. p. 322; Neal, Vol. I. p. 127. To avoid the inconvenience of particular references, I may here say that the account of Mary's reign is drawn up by a comparison of the authors above quoted, and Clarke's Martyrology, Chaps. 50—64, and Hume's Mary.

The Suffolk men presuming to remonstrate with the queen, were sharply rebuked for their insolence; and one of their leaders was put in the pillory for three days, and lost his ears, for alluding to the queen's promise, not to alter religion.

The reforming bishops were speedily removed, and most of them imprisoned; and violent papists were put into their places. Between the 5th and 31st of August,—the first month of Mary's reign,\*—Fox records *eleven* arrests; among which, were the proto-martyr Rogers, and bishops Hooper and Coverdale; old bishop Latimer, and archbishop Cranmer were arrested by the middle of the next month, together with others of less note. About the same date (Sept. 16th), the French Protestants were ordered to leave the kingdom. The learned and godly John a Lasco, superintendent of the foreign churches, was first silenced, and then compelled to depart for his native land, as was Peter Martyr, professor of divinity at Oxford. In a few months, about 800 persons, foreseeing the rising storm, fled their country; among whom were five bishops, five deans, and above fifty doctors of divinity, and other distinguished divines and preachers, "besides noblemen, merchants, tradesmen, artificers and plebians." The queen, however, had no intention of suffering her prey thus easily to escape; and soon forbade her subjects to leave the kingdom without passports.

On the 1st of October, 1553, Mary was crowned, with all the pomp and ceremony which Gardiner and half a score of popish bishops, with their mitres, copes, and cro-siers could display.

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\* She was proclaimed on the 19th of July, but can hardly be said to have commenced her reign until August 3d, when she entered London.



The parliament, which met on the 10th of the same month, were directed to repeal the laws of Edward VI. respecting religion. This they did, after a debate of six days; and enacted, under suitable pains and penalties—"That after the 20th of December next, there should be no other form of divine service but what had been used in the last year of Henry VIII."

Here was a further modification of the queen's promise not to alter religion.

In April of the same year, parliament was again assembled. The chief business of this session appears to have been, to authorize the marriage of Mary with Philip, son of the emperor Charles V. of Spain. It seems that Mary, immediately after her accession to the throne had set her heart on being married. Her kind disposition towards Courtney, the accomplished earl of Devonshire, had been hinted to that nobleman, but even gratitude to the queen for his release from the Tower, where he had been long confined, could not induce him to marry so odious a woman as Mary, even though she had a crown upon her head. She next proposed the cardinal Pole; but was dissuaded from this, on the ground of his advanced age, and growing infirmities. She then turned her heart upon Philip of Spain; with whom she became so enamoured, without having so much as seen him, as to write the first love letter which passed between them. Philip, though about eleven years younger than Mary,—he being in his twenty-seventh year and she in her thirty-eighth,—and knowing the queen to be destitute of all personal attractions, weak in intellect, and odious in heart,\*—yet consented to the marriage, and distributed

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\* Hume, in summing up the characteristics of Mary, says: "She possessed few qualities, either estimable or amiable; and her person was as little engaging as her behavior and address.

Spanish gold abundantly to bring the parliament into the ar-

Obstinacy, bigotry, violence, cruelty, malignity, revenge, tyranny ; every circumstance of her character took a tincture from her bad temper, and narrow understanding. And amidst that complication of vices, which entered into her composition, we shall scarcely find any virtue but *sincerity*, a quality which she seems to have maintained through her whole life ; except in the beginning of her reign," etc. \* \*

Not to insist on the exception to Mary's *sincerity*, which Hume admits—though this exception is sufficiently broad ; there is another on record, which the historian must have overlooked ; I refer to her submission, from " the bottom of her heart and stomach," to her father, made in 1536. In this document she puts soul and body, for time and eternity, into the hands of her most princely father. She says, among other things of the same import : " As I have, and shall, knowing your excellent learning, virtue, wisdom, and knowledge, put my soul into your direction ; and by the same have, and will in all things from henceforth direct my conscience, so my body I do wholly commit to your mercy, and fatherly piety, desiring no state, no condition, nor no meaner degree of living, but such as your grace shall appoint me ; acknowledging and confessing, that my state cannot be so vile, as either the extremity of justice would appoint unto me, or as mine offences have required or deserved." And in a letter to Cromwell, the king's vicegerent, upon the same topic, Mary says : " For mine opinion touching pilgrimages, purgatory, reliques, and such like, I assure you I have none at all, but such as I shall receive from him who hath mine whole heart in keeping, that is, the king's most gracious highness, my most benign father, who shall imprint in the same touching these matters and all other, what his inestimable virtue, high wisdom, and excellent learning, shall think convenient, and limit unto me." \* \*—See Burnet, Vol. IV. B. II. Coll. Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6. pp. 334—339.

How much of *sincerity* or truth there was in all this turning up of her heart, etc., I leave others to decide. Mary, it is true, was sufficiently resolute in the maintenance of her popish principles during Edward's reign ; but there were personal and selfish reasons enough for this ; and she well knew that she had little to fear

rangement\* (the match being very unpopular among the people,—with the ambitious hope of thus possessing himself of the crown of England, as well as of his hereditary dominions.

The match was made, and the marriage consummated ; but not with the approbation of the nation ; neither did it prove a fortunate one to the parties. It was, in one sense, indeed a merciful event to the nation ; because it probably shortened the days of this bloody queen. She sighed away her unhappy life under the neglect of her haughty consort.

A third session of parliament was called in November of the same year (1554) ; whose first business was, to prepare the way for the pope's legate, cardinal Pole, to enter the kingdom. This was done, by repealing the act of attainder under which Henry had laid the cardinal. One of the next steps of this parliament was to present, on their knees, a supplication to the king and queen, to intercede with the legate for the pardon of the two houses and the nation, for their late presumptuous rejection of the pope's supremacy. The representative of his holiness, was graciously pleased to grant the prayer of the lords and commons, on condition that all the obnoxious laws against the pope's power were immediately repealed. With these conditions the parliament complied, and received absolution *upon their knees*, from the representative of " Christ's vicar." This parliament was ready to submit their souls and bodies to their sovereign lord, the pope ; but their hands were upon their

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from Edward. Under her father it was otherwise, and she was then sufficiently hypocritical and craven spirited.

\* This is said to have been the first instance in which bribery was practised upon an English parliament.

swords, when called to give up the spoils of the monasteries, etc., which Henry had distributed among his favorites.

“The next act brought into the house,” says Neal, “was for reviving the statutes of Richard II, and Henry IV. and V, *for burning heretics*; which passed both houses, in six days, to the unspeakable joy of the popish clergy.”

Popery being now fully re-established in the kingdom, and all things being made ready for the tragedy, “The Mother of Harlots” stalked forth upon the stage, and began to play her appropriate and characteristic part: just the part she has ever played when the stage was clear for her; just the part she would now play, even in these United States, had she opportunity.

There had been erected, in different parts of London, *twenty gallows*. These, however, were chiefly designed to strike terror into the common people; and for the use of lesser offenders, such as traitors and rebels. But more costly sacrifices were thought needful to secure the safe delivery of the queen of a male child, “in body beautiful and comely, in mind noble and valiant.”\*

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\* See Dr. Weston’s prayer for the safe delivery of the Queen.—Fox, Vol. III. pp. 94, 95. The martyrologist tells us that the queen thought she could not be safely delivered until all the heretics in the tower were burned. Nothing exhibits Mary in a more ridiculous light than the preparations which she allowed—required, I should say—to be made for her accouchement. Messengers were designated, to be ready at a moment’s warning, to carry the news to the various courts of Europe; their salaries were fixed, ships kept in readiness to transport them, etc. Prayers were ordered to be offered up in the churches, such as the extract in the text indicates; rockers and nurses, etc. were engaged, and the cradle itself was prepared; the whole nation kept on tiptoe of expectation for months; and finally, the birth of a prince announced, and his comely person described, even from the pulpit; the bells rung, cannon fired, bonfires kindled:—and “in the end appeared

These were to be holocausts—whole burnt offerings. The burning commenced with JOHN ROGERS, *February 4th*, 1555. LAURENCE SAUNDERS, followed, on the 8th of February, and the next day, Bishop HOOPER, after roasting for “three quarters of an hour or more, even as a lamb, patiently he abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards, backward, nor to either side.” DR. TAYLOR perished the same day, after suffering the most unmerciful treatment.

It is not, however, my intention to write a martyrology : let him who would understand the true genius of Popery—unalterable Popery—read Fox’s third volume, or Clarke’s Martyrology, 59—64 chapters inclusive. Suffice it to say, that the fires of persecution continued to rage until November 10th 1558, when five godly martyrs perished in the same fire at Canterbury—six days before the wretched queen herself was called, as we have reason to fear, to enter that fire which shall never be quenched ; November 17th 1558, in the 43d year of her age, and the sixth of her reign.

The whole number of persons who perished during this reign—“all over mean and black,” as Burnet calls it—was not far from 300 ; including 1 archbishop, 4 bishops, 21 clergymen ; and gentlemen, laborers, mechanics, servants, women and children, sufficient to make up the sum total ; together with 16 who perished in prison.\* The un-

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neither young master nor young mistress, that any man yet to this day can hear of,” as old Fox says ; and what is still more, there is too much reason to suspect that, in part, if not in the whole, it was a popish trick to delude the miserable people.

\* Neal and Hume estimate the number “brought to the stake” at 277—Hume, Vol. II. Chap. 37. p. 544. Strype estimates them at 288. It is asserted on the authority of lord Burleigh, of the succeeding reign, that 400 perished publicly during this reign, be-

told and unutterable miseries of this reign of darkness and terror, the judgment day alone can fully reveal. God seems to have suffered this infatuated, superstitious, and odious woman to rule for a season, that the world might have an imperishable picture of Popery, drawn to the life, by its own hand, in colors of blood. It will be well for the world, if one picture suffice.

### *Congregationalism in Mary's Reign.*

It may seem almost incredible, that any Protestant Congregations could live amidst the fires of Mary's reign: Nevertheless, there is reason to believe, that there were churches, maintaining some of the distinguishing peculiarities of Congregationalism even, which lived through this storm of fire; and actually maintained their secret worship in different places, within the city of London itself.

Fox mentions the arrest of "*master Rose* and certain honest men and women of the city, to the number of thirty, in a house in Bow-Church-Yard, at the communion;" January 1st 1555.\* In another place we are told of the seizure of one *John Rough*, who had been "*elected*" the minister of "the secret society and holy congregation of God's people" which assembled in London; and of *Cuthbert Sympson*, a tailor by trade, "the *deacon* of that said godly company and congregation." This deacon, it seems, kept a book, containing "the names and accounts of the congregation," who are called "*Gospellers*;" a name given by the Papists to the followers of Wickliffe. Sympson was cruelly racked three times in one day, and again the next day, to induce him to reveal the names and places of

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sides those who were secretly murdered in prison.—Burnet, Vol. V. B. 5. p. 387; Neal, Vol. I. pp. 144, 145.

\* Acts and Monuments, Vol. III. p. 93.

abode of the members of this church : which, however, no torments could extort from him. He finally perished at the stake.\* Cuthbert Sympson seems to have been a church officer very much like the deacon of a Congregational church ;—one who kept the accounts of the church, and who had the general supervision of their temporal affairs. This is a slight incident to hang a conclusion upon, yet it clearly points to another order of things from what had heretofore existed in the kingdom. Such an officer as a *non-preaching* deacon was an anomaly in English history ; and could have been the result of nothing else but “ Wick-leue learning ;” and could have been found among none others than “ Gospellers.” I mark the incident, as furnishing the first intimation, noticed in English history, of the existence of a primitive, scriptural deacon ; and consequently, of a church, embracing scriptural principles of church polity, so far at least.

These “secret congregations, which met in private houses, in the fields, in taverns, on board of ships,” any where, to enjoy the privilege of worshipping God agreeably to the dictates of their own consciences—were, of necessity if not of choice, led to adopt the principles of Congregationalism. They were only so numerous as could conveniently assemble together. It was unnecessary to restrict their members to such as loved our Lord Jesus Christ, for no others would adventure their lives in such a cause ; they elected their own minister ; and they worshipped with few and simple ceremonies. It is said, indeed, that Rough’s church used king Edward’s Service Book ; but the good man declared, at his examination, that they were not *con-*

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\* Fox, ut sup. pp. 722—729 ; Clarke, Chap. 61 ; Neal, I. p. 148.  
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*fin*ed to it ; and in the celebration of the communion, did not use it at all.\*

Whether these churches were made what they were by the peculiarities of their situation, or had existed previously to the accession of the Persecutor, I have no means of deciding.† One thing is certain, that no church but such as was substantially Congregational could have existed, in an organized form, during the terrible persecutions of Mary's reign. And it certainly deserves remark, that this organization may be as perfectly observed under persecution, as in the highest prosperity ; no insignificant argument in favor of its being that form of church government which Christ designed for universal adoption. We have, however, fuller evidence than the hints just alluded to, that there were churches of the Congregational description as early as the time of Mary.

Orme, in his life of John Owen, (page 48), in speaking of Browne, the reputed author or discoverer of Congregationalism, in 1582, says : " Long before he was heard of, perhaps before he was born, there were persons in England who held and acted on these sentiments, as far as was practicable in their circumstances. *Bolton*, though not the first in this way, was an elder of a separate church in the beginning of queen Elizabeth's days."‡ [1558].

Gifford, writing against the Brownists at a period somewhat later, (1590), says : " Many men think they be

\* See Fox, *ut sup.*

† Clarke (Chaps. 56, 57) mentions the existence of secret congregations of Christians in different parts of the kingdom during the reigns of Henry VII. and VIII. These appear to have been Wickliffites ; and to have been quite numerous. I see nothing unreasonable in the supposition that they may have survived unto Mary's day.

‡ See Robinson's *Justification*, p. 50.



sprung up but of late ; but whereas, in very deed, it is well known, that there was a church of them in London twenty years past."

" Penry, in his address to queen Elizabeth, says : ' If we had queen Mary's days, I think we should have been as flourishing a church at this day, as ever any ; for it is well known that there were then in London, and elsewhere in exile, more flourishing churches than any tolerated by your authority.' "

The same author (Orme) says : " In the year 1567 a number of persons were imprisoned who belonged to a society of about a hundred, who appear to have been of this persuasion."\*

I introduce the above extracts out of their chronological order, that I may present, in one view, what little I have been able to collect illustrative of the progress of scriptural principles of church polity, up to the close of Mary's reign. Penry was a devoted follower of these principles, and undoubtedly knew the history of his own brethren : he asserts, without qualification, that there were flourishing Independent churches in Mary's day. And, the fact, that a few years after this date—in the early part of Elizabeth's reign—there was a single church, containing a hundred souls, is very strong presumptive evidence that these principles were not then of very recent discovery.

The reason that we have not more full historical details of these dissenters from all hierarchies, is very plain : these men were compelled to hide themselves from all the powers in authority, whether Protestant or Popish ; and consequently, little would be known of them until the watchful-

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\* See Orme, *ut sup.* ; also Hanbury's " Historical Memorials Relating to Independents," Vol. I. pp. 15—17. London, 1839. Prince's New England Chro. Sec. 11. p. 302.

ness of their enemies, or the unfaithfulness of some of their own number, discovered them to the government.

That the leaven of Congregationalism was extensively diffused through the English nation previous to the time of which I am now speaking, is very evident from the course adopted by many of the exiles who fled to the Continent on the accession of Mary. As early as June 27th 1554, a company of English exiles entered Frankfort, Germany—"the first \* \* that there arrived to remain." At their head was the famous William Whittingham, a clergyman of large fortune, which he had forsaken for the comfort of a good conscience in a foreign land. Immediately after their arrival, (July 8), they applied to the magistrates for the use of a church "wherein they might have God's word truly preached, and the sacraments sincerely, (that is, purely) ministered in their natural tongue. July 14th they obtained their request, and then (forming themselves into an *Independent* church) consult what order of service to use, and the English order [established in the latter part of Edward's reign] being perused, they by general consent conclude, that the answering aloud after the minister should not be used; that the litany, surplice, and many other things, be omitted; that in the sacraments also, sundry things be omitted as superstitious and superfluous. *And having chosen their ministers and deacons*, they enter their church on (Lord's Day) July 29."\* From Neal we learn, that this church were of opinion "that in all controversies among themselves, and especially in cases of appeal, the *dernier resort* should be in the church."† One of their articles of agreement was, "that the ministers and seniors [elders], and every of them, be subject to ecclesiastical dis-

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\* "Treatise of the Troubles in Frankfort," in Prince's N. E. Chron. Sec. 11. p. 286.

† His. Puritans, Vol. I. pp. 150—157.

cipline and correction, as others,—private members of the church be.”\*

I have been particular in marking the dates, as above, to show, that the peculiar notions of this church were not derived from any intercourse with those among whom they had gone to reside. Whatever they were, they were brought with the exiles from England. And that they were essentially Congregational, or Independent, is very obvious from their proceedings; from the character of their church officers—simple elders and deacons; and above all, from the grand principle of Congregationalism which they recognized in asserting the church to be the ultimate source of all power and authority under Christ.

Dr. Cox and his friends joined these exiles about eight months after their organization; and by their attempts to introduce the entire English service, finally broke up this church. After various manœuvres the Congregationalists being out-voted, retired to Geneva rather than live in a quarrel at Frankfort. In Geneva, Mr. Whittingham and his friends established another church, which, “in its discipline, government, and form of worship, is said to have varied but little from that of the Congregational churches of the present day.”†

“Other exiles out of England set up another (Independent) church at Embden, in East Friesland, whereof bishop Scory was the superintendent. Others formed another (Independent) church at Wesel, in West Phalia, to which bishop Coverdale preaches. But he being called away, they removed to Arrow in Switzerland, under the conduct of Mr. Thomas Seaver.”

I extract the above from the accurate Prince, who in a note says: “I call them all *Independent* churches; for

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\* Troubles in Frankfort, quoted by Hanbury, p. 248, Note d.

† Baylies' Historical Memoir of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1. p. 3.

though their historians give them not this title, yet they were plainly such in reality." \* And even the church organized by Dr. Cox and his coadjutors, seems finally to have embraced principles and practices more nearly in accordance with our denominational peculiarities than those on which they set out ; and to have become entirely reconciled to their injured brethren at Geneva.\*

From all which it appears, That Congregationalism had an embodied existence in its *principles*—though not in name—at home and abroad, during even the reign of the “bloody Mary.”

We are now about to emerge from the dark ages of our history. We are approaching a period when the principles of Congregationalism were fully discovered, and developed, and maintained ; a period memorable for mighty men and wonderful events—men and events which are likely to be remembered, and whose influence will be felt, while the world shall stand.

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## CHAPTER XII.

ACCESSION OF ELIZABETH, 1558. THE NON-CONFORMISTS.—  
THE PURITANS.

Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, succeeded her sister Mary. During her sister's tyrannical reign, this princess was in constant jeopardy ; she suffered imprisonment, and narrowly escaped with her life. A woman of less prudence would have fallen a victim to the jealous bigotry of Mary.

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\* N. E. Chro. Sec. 11. p. 287, and note.

Elizabeth, from motives of interest, if not from principle, was a friend of the Reformation ; and as such, her accession to the throne was joyfully hailed by all the Protestants of the kingdom.

She found the nation in a most wretched condition ; burdened with a foreign war, and distracted and disgusted by a home administration of unparalleled meanness and cruelty. And though she ascended the throne amidst the joyful acclamations of the parliament and the people, she was environed with difficulties and dangers. She had been pronounced illegitimate by the pope, and her title to the crown was openly questioned ; a large portion of her people were zealous papists ; while a yet larger part were inflamed with the deepest hatred against the authors and abettors of the late persecutions.

Watchfulness, firmness, and prudence, were indispensable requisites in the new administration. And these it certainly displayed. It may indeed be reasonably questioned, whether, in the management of the religious interests of the nation, the government did not descend from *prudence* to time-serving.

### *Reign of Elizabeth.*

The queen, on assuming the reins of government, carefully avoided giving any unnecessary offence or alarm to the advocates of Popery ; but, at the same time, she encouraged the Reformers to hope for important advantages from her reign. She retained quite a number of her sister's popish counsellors ; but balanced their influence by introducing nearly an equal number of new members, devoted to the interests of the Reformation. She recalled the exiles for religion ; though she inhibited preaching without a special licence. She forbade the *host* to be elevated any more

in her presence ; but retained many of the appendages of Popery in her private chapel.

She prudently declined allowing any very extensive changes in the national religion until she had consulted her parliament, which was summoned at an early day—Jan. 25th, 1559.

The court had taken pains—according to the fashion of the day—to secure a majority in the parliament favorable to the designs of the new government. One of the first acts of this body relating to ecclesiastical affairs, was, to restore to the crown, “the first-fruits and tenths,” which Mary had given up to the church. Another act repealed some of the laws against heretics ; and made it no longer penal to use the religious rites of Edward’s day. The parliament also authorized the use of the vulgar tongue in the public services of the church. They gave the queen power to nominate bishops to vacant sees by *congé d’elire*—or leave to elect. They suppressed the monasteries established by Mary, and gave their revenues to the crown. But the most important acts of this parliament were those establishing the queen’s *Supremacy*, and the *Uniformity of Common Prayer*. These two acts were the fountain-head of all the ecclesiastical impositions, and the exertions of arbitrary power and cruelty for which the reign of this Elizabeth is memorable. The former of these acts obliges “all persons in any public employs, whether civil or ecclesiastical, to take an oath in recognition of the queen’s right to the crown, and of her *Supremacy in all cases, ecclesiastical and civil*, on penalty of forfeiting all their promotions in the church, and of being declared incapable of holding any public office.\*

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\* Neal, Vol. I. pp. 166, 167. ; Hume, Vol. II. Ch. 38. pp. 567—569.

This act also authorized the queen and her successors to appoint commissioners “to use, occupy, and exercise under her and them, all manner of jurisdiction \* \* touching any spiritual or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the realms of England and Ireland, \* \* to visit, reform, redress, order, correct, and amend all errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, contempts, offences, and enormities whatsoever,” etc.\* This clause was the foundation of that iniquitous, inquisitorial, tyrannical court of *High Commissions*, to which we shall have frequent occasion to refer in the course of this, and the succeeding reigns.

These two acts of parliament made the queen sovereign over the actions and consciences of all her subjects. They made her the author and finisher of their faith; they hung on her girdle the keys of church discipline; they empowered her to impose rites and ceremonies at her pleasure; they gave her power to appoint all bishops; and by her permission alone, could the the clergy assemble in convocation, to consult and deliberate for the good of the church.

The act establishing “Uniformity of Common Prayer, and Service in the Church,” etc., placed the church about mid-way between where Henry VIII. and Edward VI. left it; a little in advance of Henry’s establishment, yet, considerably behind Edward’s. The Mass was abolished; the services of the church were performed in English; and the Liturgy of Edward was adopted in substance. The offensive passages against the pope, in the English service, were, however, stricken out; and the doctrine of the corporeal presence in the eucharist, was left doubtful; “some of the collects were a little altered.” The old popish festivals and habits were retained; and images, and crucifixes in the

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\* Neal, Vol. I. pp. 166, 167; Hume, Vol. II. Ch. 38. pp. 567—569.

churches reluctantly abandoned. The sacrament was to be received only in the posture of kneeling ; and unleavened wafer-bread alone was allowed. Entire uniformity in all things was demanded. Such was the act of Uniformity ; which, with the act of Supremacy, proved a two-edged sword, cutting down indiscriminately Papists and Protestants. The latter, however, were much the severer sufferers ; the queen always appearing more tender of the Papists, than of the non-conforming Protestants. Indeed, she was more than half Papist herself. It is difficult to believe, that anything but state policy, made her at all friendly to the Protestant religion.

The reader must not suppose, that these acts were passed, much less *enforced*, without great opposition. The Popish bishops, of course, voted against the act of Supremacy ; for they could not, with any color of consistency, change again ; having acknowledged the supremacy of the crown under Henry and Edward, and then of the pope, under Mary. They accordingly refused the oath, and were removed from their bishoprics, with a single exception. Three of the chief instruments of cruelty under the late reign were imprisoned ; Bonner,\* of London, White of Winchester, and Watson of Lincoln ;—but were not kept in rigorous confinement. A large proportion of the inferior

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\* Bishop Jewel tells us, that Bonner, being sent to the Tower, “ went to see some criminals that were kept there, and called them his friends and neighbors ; but one of them answered, ‘ *Go, you beast, into hell, and find your friends there ;* for we are none of them. I killed but one man upon a provocation, and do truly repent of it ; but you have killed many holy persons, of all sorts, without any provocation from them, and are hardened in your impenitence.’ ”—Burnet’s Records, Vol. V. P. III. B. VI. pp. 425, 426.



clergy, readily conformed, and kept their stations in the church.\*

*The Nonconformists.*

But, although the Papists generally, found it so easy to reconcile their duty and their interests, it was far otherwise with many of the stanchest Protestants. The returned exiles, particularly, found themselves greatly embarrassed and burdened by the doings of the court. The oath of Supremacy, after some explanation from the queen, they took : but with the act of Uniformity, as passed by parliament, they were greatly troubled. Their residence among the Reformed churches on the continent, had deeply impressed them with the importance of a thorough, scriptural reformation of the church, from every thing which savored of Popery. They regarded the policy of the court as temporizing and dangerous. The copes, and square caps, and surplices, which the clergy were commanded to wear, were in themselves, things indifferent and unimportant ; but, they were regarded by the people as essential to the right performance of ecclesiastical offices ; and were, therefore, highly objectionable, because they served to confound the old religion with the reformed, in the minds of the common people. So of kneeling at the sacrament ; the posture was unimportant ; but, as this posture had been assumed by the Papists as an act of adoration to the supposed corporeal presence of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine ; the Nonconformists insisted, that it was countenancing this er-

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\* Hume says, out of nearly 10,000 parishes, only 80 rectors and vicars resigned ; and of other dignitaries in the church, a sufficient number to make up a sum total of 169. Add to these, 13 bishops, and we have 182 in all, who sacrificed their livings to their professed faith.—Burnet makes the number 199.—Neal says, “not above 243 clergymen quitted their livings.”

ror in the minds of the vulgar, to enforce the practice of kneeling at the sacrament. Crucifixes might remind men of Christ's sufferings and death ; and the burning candles, that he was the light of the world ; but, these things had constituted an essential part of the Romish worship, and for the Protestant church to retain them, was to retain what the people would regard as an important part of Romanism.

Thus reasoned many of the most devoted friends of the Protestant religion ; who, for their opposition to the act of Uniformity, were called—*Nonconformists*.

The court party insisted, that, as these things were non-essentials, it was unreasonable stiffness for any to refuse compliance with the established order of the church ; and accordingly refused to relax the laws in favor of their fellow-sufferers for Protestantism. Several of the learned and devout exiles were offered bishoprics and other preferments, which they utterly refused, because their consciences would not allow them to give any countenance to the idolatry of Rome. Among these were such men as Coverdale, the translator of the Bible, and Fox, the learned Martyrologist. Others accepted of preferment with trembling ; influenced chiefly by the fear of utterly stopping the Reformation if all refused ; and with the hope of obtaining some modification of the laws afterwards, through their influence with the court ; such were Grindal, and Jewel, and others. Indeed, it would seem that nearly all of the new bishops had at first, objections to the popish habits enjoined by law, and submitted to wear them, from motives of policy, rather than of choice. Having, however, involved themselves with the policy of the court, they were gradually drawn more and more into the high-church doctrines of the government ; and some of these conforming bishops became bitter persecutors of all who scrupled their doubtful compliance.

It was this rock of offence which split the Protestants of Elizabeth's day. The controversy did not *originate* in her reign, but in Edward's,—as I have already remarked\*—but, it was in the days of which I am now writing (1558—1570,) that this unhappy controversy was most fully developed; and produced, for the time being, the most painful consequences; though ultimately overruled to the glory of God, in the development and establishment of purer, simpler, and more scriptural principles of Church government and worship.

### *Origin of the Puritans.*

The division which began among the Reformers upon the subject of habits and ceremonies, gradually widened until two distinct parties were formed in the kingdom, the court party and the Puritans.

*The Puritans* were those who were for a *purer*, and more simple form of religious worship;—who were in favor of carrying the Reformation forward, at once, to the standard of scriptural truth, so far as rites, and ceremonies, and discipline, and worship were concerned.

The court party, were for retaining so much of the ancient ceremonial as should keep the people quiet and easy under the new order of things, and make religion courtly and attractive.

The division began as I have described; but it soon involved other points of difference. The principles adopted by the respective parties, caused them to diverge further and further from each other, until, in all that appertained to the outward form and worship of the church, there was an incurable difference between the two parties.

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\* See back, p. 209.

As this controversy affected materially the whole subsequent history of the English church, and is intimately connected with the history of Congregationalism,—it may be well to present in one view, the chief points of difference between the two conflicting parties.

*The Court Reformers maintained :*

1. The absolute sovereignty of the prince over the church ; his right to determine the articles of faith, and the rites, and ceremonies of the church ; provided his decrees were not repugnant to the Word of God, or the statute law of the realm ; but the court were the only authorized judges as to what was repugnant to the laws of God, and of the realm.

2. That the church of Rome was a true church, though somewhat corrupted ; consequently, that her clergy were in the apostolic succession, and that their ministrations were valid.

3. That the Scriptures were not a standard of discipline, or church government ; but, that the practice of the primitive church for the first four or five centuries was a much more perfect standard, and better suited to the splendor of a national establishment.

4. That things in themselves indifferent,—being neither commanded nor forbidden in the Scriptures,—might be enjoined by the civil magistrate, and enforced upon subjects by pains and penalties.

*The Puritans maintained :*

1. That the extensive claim of the prince, to regulate and alter the religion of the nation, was unreasonable and unscriptural ; they thought that the clergy should have the

principal share in such a work, subject to the advice, counsel, and supervision of the king.

2. That the pope, so far from being a true bishop, was the very *antichrist* of Scripture ; and the church of Rome, no true church ; and her ministrations, superstitious and idolatrous ; and, that it was unsafe to rest the validity of clerical ordinations on an apostolic succession coming through such polluted channels as the church of Rome furnished.

3. That the Scriptures were a standard of church government and discipline, as well as of doctrine ; so far, at least, that nothing should be insisted on which was not expressly enjoined in the Scriptures, or fairly deducible from them : and that no church officers or ordinances should be allowed in the Christian church which are not recognized in the New Testament.

4. That things which Christ had left indifferent, ought not to be imposed upon men by any human laws ; and that such rites and ceremonies and vestments as had been abused to idolatry, and were intimately associated in the minds of men with Popery itself, were not indifferent things, but positively dangerous to true religion, and therefore sinful.\*

The above, are the chief points of difference which separated, and finally alienated the Protestants of Elizabeth's reign from each other.

In addition to these principal points, there were several other things which the Puritans disliked, and earnestly desired to have reformed.—They complained, that the bishops assumed to be a superior order to presbyters, and claimed the sole right to ordain, and exercise ecclesiastical discipline.—They complained of the exorbitant power of the

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\* See Neal, Vol. I. Chap. 4. *passim* ; particularly pp. 182—185.

bishop's courts.—Of the promiscuous communion of the ungodly and the godly at the Lord's table.—They objected to the confinement of the church to a written form of prayer, on all occasions,—to the reading of the Apocrypha in the churches,—to sundry festivals of the church,—to the sign of the cross in baptism,—to the use of godfathers and godmothers to the exclusion of parents,—to the confirmation of children, and their consequent admission to the Lord's table, as soon as they could repeat the Lord's Prayer, and their Catechism ; and to several other rites and ordinances enjoined in the Book of Common Prayer.

To all these things they felt objections ; but still, it does not appear that the continuance of these grievances would have prevented the general conformity of the Puritans, if upon other points they had been made easy. At how early a period their several objections to the hierarchal worship became common among the Puritans, it is not easy, perhaps, to decide ; it seems pretty evident, however, that they prevailed extensively within the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign.\*

The court, following out their principles, made the government of church and state little short of an absolute despotism. The church was kept on the very verge of Popery during this, and the two succeeding reigns ; and all civil, as well as ecclesiastical liberty would have been utterly extinguished in the nation, but for the determined, and self-denying opposition of the Puritans.

The work of persecution for not wearing the habits, and for refusing the idolatrous ceremonies of the hierarchy, seems to have begun openly, in the spring of 1563 ; when the Reverend Thomas Sampson, dean of Christ's church,

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\* See Neal, Chap. 5.

and Dr. Lawrence Humphreys, regius professor of divinity at Oxford, and president of Magdalen College,—“men of high renown throughout the nation, for learning, piety, and zeal for the Reformation, and exiles for religion in queen Mary’s reign,”—were summoned before the high-commission court, and told peremptorily, that they must conform to the habits, i. e.—wear the square cap and long gown, and the surplice and non-regent’s hood, and must kneel and receive the wafer-bread at the sacrament, or lose their preferments. They replied, that their consciences would not allow them to do these things, let the consequences be what they might. Upon which they were immediately imprisoned, and lost their preferments.

About the same time, the Puritan clergy of London were summoned before the commissioners, and thus addressed : “My masters and ye ministers of London, the council’s pleasure is, that ye strictly keep the unity of apparel, like this man who stands here canonically habited with a square cap, a scholar’s gown priest-like, [and] a tippet; and in the church, a linen surplice. Ye that will subscribe, write *Volo*; those that will not subscribe, write *Nolo*: Be brief, make no words.”\* When the ministers offered to speak, they were commanded to hold their peace; their names were immediately called over, and they were bid to say, *yea*, or *nay*, at once. Out of 100, there were 61 who subscribed *Volo*, and 37 who absolutely refused; and among them, some of the best preachers in London; all of whom were immediately suspended, and forbidden to exercise their ministry. Archbishop Parker was the leader in these iniquitous prosecutions against the nonconforming Puritans.

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\* Neal, Vol. I. p. 236.—A clergyman was placed before them, dressed out in full canonicals, as a pattern to which the Puritans were required to conform.

The consequences of these proceedings were, that many of the churches of London were shut up, and thousands of the people were deprived of the Word of Life. The silenced ministers were compelled to preach privately and without authority, to abandon their profession and turn their attention to secular pursuits ; or to go out of the kingdom. Some few of them became chaplains in private gentlemen's families, and there sowed the seed in the minds of the rising generation,—the fruit of which was seen in after years. Some of the ministers who had large families were reduced to absolute beggary.

By these severities the people were irritated against the prelates almost to rebellion ; and scoffed and railed upon them as they went by ; Whitgift says, actually “ spit in their faces.” But little did archbishop Parker care for all these things.

To make clean work of it, the archbishop soon called in all the licences to preach the gospel, throughout his province, and required all preachers to take out new ones. And before he would grant them, he demanded an oath of entire, and slavish submission to the queen, to the privy council, to his grace of Canterbury, and “ to the articles and mandates of their bishop, archdeacon, chancellors,” etc.—“ in a word,” says Mr. Neal, “ to be subject to the control of all their superiors with patience.”\* To carry out his plans, his grace appointed spies and informers in every parish ; to watch the Puritans—both minister and people—and to give information under oath respecting all deviations from strict ecclesiastical conformity.

Notwithstanding all, Puritanism increased—both among the learned, and the common people. Cambridge became

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\* Neal, Vol. I. p. 241.



“a nest of Puritans,” and the people flocked by hundreds to hear the suspended ministers, whenever and wherever they ventured to preach.

In the year 1566, these sufferers for conscience sake published to the world a vindication of their conduct, in refusing the Popish habits and ceremonies. This was answered by the archbishop, or some of his partizans. Other pamphlets followed from the Puritans. At length the bishops finding that the controversy was extending the evil which they sought to suppress,—that the people were eagerly reading the pamphlets and books of the suspended ministers, and imbibing their principles,—procured a decree of the star-chamber,\* forbidding any person to print or publish any Puritan books or pamphlets, and requiring “all stationers, booksellers, and merchants trading in books,” to enter into bonds to observe the decree of the council.†

### *The Era of Separation.*

These violent proceedings, instead of forcing the objects of them into conformity, drove many of them further than ever from the persecuting hierarchy.

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\* *The Star-chamber Court*, was composed of some 20 or 30 noblemen, bishops, judges and counsellors. These were nominated by the queen. When she was present, the others were mere counsellors; in her absence, all questions were decided by a vote of the majority. This court sustained very nearly the same relation to the *civil* affairs of the kingdom which the high-commission court did to the ecclesiastical affairs. Both courts were downright inquisitions. They were the curse and terror of the nation during this, and the two following reigns. Hume says: “The courts, alone, of high-commission and the star-chamber, were sufficient to lay the whole kingdom at the mercy of the prince.”—See Appendix to James I. p. 267, and App. III. to Elizabeth, p. 245. Also Neal, Vol. I. Chap. 8. pp. 503, 504.

† Neal, Vol. I. pp. 250, 251.

Near the end of August 1566, the suspended, disfranchised, and silenced Puritans met to debate the question, whether, in their present situation, shut out as they were from the national church, and silenced, and persecuted by her governors—it was not their duty to withdraw entirely from the church of England, and set up separate congregations, in private places, as they should have opportunity; there to worship God with simple and scriptural rites and ceremonies, such as their consciences approved. “After prayer and a serious debate,” they came to an affirmative decision of this important question; and thus introduced a new era in the ecclesiastical history of England,—*The Era of Separation*.

The persecuted ministers found multitudes ready to follow them to the woods, or any place of concealment, where they might worship God without “*idolatrous geare*.” The queen and her bishops were soon upon the scent; and in June of the next year, (1567,) a congregation of 100 persons was discovered at Plumber’s Hall, London, most of whom were taken into custody; and, after an examination before the bishop of London, between 20 and 30 of them, with Bolton one of their elders were sent to Bridewell; where they remained—men and women—in close confinement for more than a year.\*

The next year, (1568,) the queen was brought to the verge of death by sickness; and the Protestant religion was in the greatest peril; for the queen of Scots, the presumptive heir to the English crown, was a zealous Papist. Still Bridewell, and the other prisons were full of Puritans. The queen recovered, and the work of persecution went on. The reins of government were drawn more tightly, and the lash of discipline was applied more freely and severely.

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\* See Prince, *New Eng. Chronology*, Sec. 11. p. 302.

These violent efforts of the queen and her hierarchy to force men's consciences, made, doubtless, many hypocrites ; but still increased the number of the Puritans. Another effect of these courtly measures, was, to open the eyes of men to the inconsistency of the entire establishment with the teachings of Christ and his apostles. From the days of John Wickliffe, there had been floating among the English people, the detached principles of Congregational dissent. These principles, though smothered by the persecution of the Lollards, as already related—were not extinguished. The partial Reformation under Henry VIII, gave them new life. The more thorough Reformation under Edward VI, recognizing some of these very principles of dissent, served, probably, to reconcile those who had embraced them, to the established Church ; while, at the same time, it confirmed them in the belief of their favorite principles.

Mary's persecuting reign drove back the quieted Dissenters, to their first principles again. The probability that there were secret congregations of these persons, in different parts of the kingdom during the reign of Popery, has already been considered. Abroad, among the English exiles, some of these principles were certainly developed, as we have already seen.

On the return of the exiles to England, after the accession of Elizabeth, the force of education and the spirit of the times, which ran so strongly for national establishments,—would doubtless have drawn most of those who preferred a simple form of church government and worship, into the establishment, had there been a suitable regard manifested for the conscientious scruples of the Puritans. Elizabeth, however, had no notion of framing her establishment to accommodate men of *squeamish stomachs*, as the Puri-

tans were considered. Her determination was to have an ostentatious national church ; and to compel all her subjects to conform, outwardly at least, to the order of the church. She cared not, she said, to ransack people's consciences ; but outward conformity she must and would have, or she would hew them into shape. But this was found no easy task. The more she hewed the rougher some of her materials grew ; and the more unlikely to become polished stones in her idolatrous temple.

The very severity of the queen and the bishops drove back the Puritans to first principles, and to a more thorough examination of the whole frame-work of church polity. The scattered elements of Wickliffism were collected together ; the convincing light of experience was thrown upon the sacred page ; the writings of the earliest fathers of the church were examined ; and the result was, the full discovery and development of those great principles of church polity on which have been erected the thousands of churches now known as CONGREGATIONAL.

But I am anticipating the course of historical detail. To return to the history. The bishop's spies were now, (1570,) in every suspected place ; many learned and pious ministers, and devout laymen, had been arrested, dragged before these spiritual inquisitions—the high-commissions and bishop's courts—compelled to turn their own accusers ; abused by their lordly judges, and fined and imprisoned at their discretion ; and all for what ? For worshipping God in private houses and in the woods, without the help of the Common Prayer Book, or the adornment of the square cap, and cope, and surplice. For such *crimes* many were reduced to the last extremity of want and suffering ; so that their very jailors were touched with pity ; testifying that

their prisoners had not wherewithal to purchase food, or firing ; for lack of which, numbers perished in prison.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### ROBERT BROWNE.—THE BROWNISTS.

Having laid before the reader a summary view of ecclesiastical affairs during the first twelve years of Elizabeth's reign, we are now to open a new chapter in the history of our denomination. We have hitherto considered Congregationalism rather in its principles and doctrines, as occasionally developed by those of other professions and connections ; we have contemplated it in its isolated and partially developed elements. We are now to see these scattered elements collected ; and to view Congregationalism in its embodied form.

The unworthy instrument, whose labors are first to be noticed, is ROBERT BROWNE. This man has the honor of being the first open and persecuted advocate of Congregational principles of church polity during this reign. And by most historians he has been reckoned as the very father of our denomination. But, not to revert to the statements already made, showing that there were persons in England who entertained the same general principles, long before Browne was heard of—perhaps before he was born—it is manifest from the history of this man's contemporaries and fellow-sufferers for the truth, that there were other and more worthy instruments in this work than Robert Browne ; —men of piety and learning in the different professions of

divinity, law and medicine—who, though they embraced for substance the same ecclesiastical views, yet called no man master ; yea, and some of them did not so much as know precisely what Browne's opinions were. If it should be thought strange that men, without a knowledge of each other's sentiments, should embrace substantially the same view ; let it be remembered, that these men all started upon the same great principle—the *entire sufficiency of the Scriptures to instruct them respecting the POLITY, as well as the faith of the church.* And drawing their knowledge from the same inspired source, it is not strange at all that they embraced the same general principles of church government and discipline. Indeed, England was full of these principles and doctrines, suppressed and kept out of sight by the severity of the times, but ready to burst out, and consolidate in open separation from the persecuting hierarchy, so soon as suitable leaders could be found to encourage and guide the common mind. Browne was a man well fitted to stir up the popular mind ; yea, to fan it into a flame.

ROBERT BROWNE was born 1550, a descendant of an ancient and honorable family in Rutlandshire.\* He was a near relative of Cecil—afterwards lord Burleigh—Elizabeth's favorite secretary of state, and lord high treasurer of England.

Browne was educated at Cambridge ; and was somewhat distinguished as a scholar. He was first a schoolmaster ; and afterwards a preacher. As a preacher, he gained con-

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\* It is mentioned by Bogue and Bennet, (*His. of Dissenters*) that one of Browne's ancestors enjoyed the *chartered* privilege, from Henry VIII, "of wearing his cap in the presence of the king, or his heirs, or any lords spiritual or temporal ; and not to put it off but for his own ease or pleasure."

siderable reputation among the common people, by the earnestness of his manner, and the vehemence of his delivery. He early distinguished himself by his puritan zeal ; and at the age of twenty-one or two, became a leader among the Puritans in and about London. In June, 1571, with ten others, whom Neal calls " the chief Puritans about London,"—he was summoned before the archbishop, to answer for his non-conformity. He offered to subscribe to the doctrinal articles, and the sacraments of the church of England, and to use the Book of Common Prayer, " as far as it tended to edification ;" but, refused *entire* conformity to the order, and government, and discipline of the church. With this subscription the archbishop would not be satisfied ; and nothing but the interposition of powerful friends, shielded Browne from the fury of the law.

We next hear of him, travelling up and down the country, inveighing against the ceremonies and discipline of the church, and exhorting the people not to conform to them.

The bishop of Norwich soon took him in hand, and delivered him to the sheriff of the county ; this was in 1580, or 1581.\* Browne acknowledged his offence, and was re-

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\* Hanbury, (" Historical Memorials," Vol. I. pp. 19, 20,) has preserved two letters of Dr. Freke, then (1581) bishop of Norwich, in which he complains to Cecil most bitterly, of Browne's conduct and influence in his lordship's diocese, he says : " His arrogant spirit of reproving being such as is to be marvelled at, the man being also to be feared, lest, if he were at liberty, he would seduce the vulgar sort of the people who greatly depend on him, assembling themselves to the number of a hundred at a time, in private houses and conventicles, to hear him, not without danger of some thereabout." In another letter, his lordship hints that Brown was *winked at*, if not of policy set on, by certain "*gentlemen*."

The bishop does not appear to suspect Cecil himself, of "*wink-*

leased. But, though he acknowledged his offence against the ecclesiastical laws of the realm, he does not seem to have promised amendment ; or, if he did, he soon broke his promise : for in 1582, he published a work entitled : “ *A Book which showeth the Life and Manner of all true Christians,*” to which was prefixed, “ *A treatise on Reformation, without tarrying for any : and of the wickedness of those preachers who will not reform themselves and their charge, because they will tarry till the magistrate command and compel them.*”\*

The title of his book illustrates the temper of the man, and the nature of his principles. This publication procured him a third arrest. Through lord Burleigh he soon obtained his release again : after which he returned to his

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ing at” Browne’s movements, but others have ventured to assert, that it is altogether possible that it was even so.

\* This book was printed at Middleburgh, by Richard Painter, 1582. 4to. pp. 112. “The contents are comprised in 185 questions and propositions in tabular columns : headed, The state of Christians ; \* \* The state of Heathen ; \* \* The Antichristian state ; \* \* The Jewish state. The whole is reduced into analytical principles in phrases and single words. The book is an excellent specimen of typographical arrangement, and is excessively scarce.”—*Hanbury.*

As I shall have occasion to refer very often to Mr. Hanbury’s invaluable work, it may be well to state, that Benjamin Hanbury one of the deacons of the first Congregational church which was formed in England, is the learned editor of Hooker’s *Ecc. Polity* and other works, the author of an *Inquiry concerning the First Congregational Church in England*, and more recently, of one of great labor and value, entitled : “ *Historical Memorials relating to the Independents, or Congregationalists ;*” containing copious extracts from the writings of all the early Congregationalists. But one volume has yet been published. 8vo. pp. 607. fine print. London.



father's house, where he remained quiet four years. His spirit being again stirred within him, we soon find him with an assistant, Richard Harrison, travelling up and down the country, preaching his peculiar sentiments, and stirring up the people to revolt from the Established Church. What his peculiar views upon church polity were, will appear from the following summary.

*Browne's sentiments.*

He maintained—That the Church of England was anti-christian in her polity, and that her officers were unscriptural in their character and appointment.—He denied the right of the throne to exercise jurisdiction over the affairs of the church.—He recognized the injunctions of the Scriptures, and the authorized practice of the apostolic churches as the only sources from which instruction relative to church order and discipline should be drawn : and insisted that these authorities required,—that “a church should be confined within the limits of a single congregation ;” and should consist of such only, as “made a confession of their faith, in the presence of each other, and signed a covenant, obliging themselves to walk together in the order of the gospel, according to certain rules and agreements therein contained.”—He believed that the Scriptures gave “the whole power of admitting and excluding members, with the deciding of all controversies, to the brotherhood.”—That church officers should be chosen from the church, by the votes of the brethren ; and the preachers, at least, should be separated to their work, by fasting and prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the brethren.—He seems to have recognized *five* kinds of office bearers in the church, viz. a Pastor, a Teacher, Elders or ancients, Relievers or deacons, and Widows.—He maintained, that, as the vote of the church could *make*

church officers, so, it could reduce them again to mere laymen; not allowing the priesthood to be a distinct order from the laity.—He confined the labors of a minister to his own church; recognizing no authority in the pastor of one church to administer the ordinances to another church.—All the brethren of a church were allowed, by him, license to ask questions of the preacher in their public assemblies, and to confer together upon the subject matter of his sermons.—He held that one church could exercise no jurisdiction over another; though it might give advice, counsel, and even reproof; and, if needful, withdraw fellowship from such as walked disorderly.—Every church, in all other respects, was considered by him as entirely independent.—“*In short, every church, or society of Christians meeting in one place, was, according to the Brownists, A BODY CORPORATE, having full power within itself, to admit and exclude members, to choose and ordain officers; and, when the good of the society required it, to depose them; without being accountable to classis, convocations, synods, councils, or any jurisdiction whatever.*” \*

It is evident from this account of Brownism, that, in its essential features, it corresponded with Congregationalism, as since established in New England.

These sentiments were first openly advocated about the year 1580.

### *First separate Congregation of Brownists.*

About the year 1583, the first separate congregation was

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\* Neal, Vol. I. pp. 378—380; Hanbury, Vol. I. Chap. 2 passim; Neal's Hist. of New England, Vol. I. pp. 61—65.

gathered upon these principles.\* Its existence had scarcely commenced, however, before the queen and her bishops laid violent hands upon it; the congregation was broken up; and many of the members, together with Browne himself, fled to Holland; the refuge of all the oppressed Protestants of those days. At Middleburgh, in the state of Zealand, the refugees found a resting-place from oppression; and were permitted to organize a church on their own principles.†

In a little time,—from some cause not certainly known,—dissensions arose among the brethren of this church. Browne abandoned them; and with a few adherents retreated to Scotland, as early as 1584; where he sowed his “*popple*,”—as king James I. says, among the Scots. From Scotland he returned, the next year, into England;‡ and so far conformed, as to obtain a rectorship in Northamptonshire, “and that none of the meanest.” It is doubtful, however, whether he ever renounced his principles of church polity; for, he never preached in his church, but supplied it by a curate; and Fuller, (Chh. His.) who had known Browne, says: “I will never believe that he ever formally recanted his opinions, either by word or writing, as to the main of what he maintained.”§

After his return to England, his life is represented to

\* Neal says: In 1586; but Hanbury’s account requires it to be put two or three years, at least, earlier. See Vol. I. p. 22.

† Lucy Aikin, in her *Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth*, says: “He founded *several* churches” in Holland. Quoted in App. to Barklie’s *His. Memoir of Ply. Colony*, Vol. II.

‡ Neal says, in 1589; but Hanbury, who is the best authority, says, 1585.

§ Quoted by Hanbury, p. 24.

have been idle, immoral, and dissolute.\* At length, his poverty, pride, and passion, involved him in a quarrel with the constable of his parish ; which resulted in the commitment of the decrepit old man to the Northampton gaol ; to which place he was carried upon his bed in a cart, being unable to walk. Here he soon sickened and died, in the year 1630, and in the eighty-first of his age, unloved and unwept.

Thus perished in disgrace, a man who had discernment to discover, and courage to advocate, some of the soundest principles of church polity which the world has ever known ; principles, which required only to be cleared of the impurities with which the temper of the man, and the spirit of the age had tarnished them, to shine forth as lights to the church, and a blessing to the world.

The church in Middleburgh, in the mean time, being forsaken of its pastor, and rent with internal dissensions, soon crumbled to pieces and perished.†

Frequent attempts have been made to cast reproach on Congregationalists by reference to the exceptionable character and miserable end of Browne ; but let the candid of all parties judge who have the most occasion to be ashamed of their relation to Robert Browne. While he was accused of nothing but enmity towards the anti-scriptural character of the church of England, he was persecuted and hunted down like a wild beast : thirty-two times he was imprisoned.

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\* Pagit, quoted by Hanbury, p. 24, note *e*, says : " Old father Browne being reproved for beating his old wife, distinguished, that he did not beat her as his wife, but as a curst old woman."

† Harrison, Browne's associate and assistant, seems to have remained at Middleburgh, where he died in the faith which he had labored to defend—"in this faith," says Ainsworth, "that we profess."—Hanbury, p. 172.

But, when he professed conformity to her rites and ceremonies, he was received to the bosom of the hierarchy, and retained in her embrace, though openly immoral, dissolute, and abandoned ; thus showing, as Pierce, in his “ Vindication of Dissenters,” shrewdly remarks,—That “ our *adversaries* are more strict in punishing men for disparaging *their constitution*, than for transgressing the undoubted *laws of Christ*.”\*

*Progress of Brownism.—Thacker and Copping executed,  
1583.*

In order to present a connected view of Browne’s life, I have disregarded the chronological order of our history. I now resume.

The principles and doctrines promulgated by Browne, and for which he suffered so much, found many friends and advocates ; and such as were ready to defend them and suffer for them.

The year 1583 is memorable in our history for the public execution of two clergymen for their attachment to these opinions. June 4th, *Elias Thacker* was hanged at St. Edmundsbury ; and two days after, *John Copping*. They were accused of “ spreading certain books seditiously penned by Robert Browne against the Book of Common Prayer established by the laws of this realm.”†

These appear to have been the proto-martyrs of the denomination. And, for what were these worthy ministers hanged like public felons ? Were they charged with any crime against the state ? Were they accused of disloyalty to their queen ? Were they suspected of heresy even in their doctrinal creed ? No. Nothing of this sort was laid

\* Quoted by Hanbury, p. 24. note *a*.

† Neal, Vol. I. p. 389.

to their charge. "They were both sound in the doctrinal articles of the church of England, and were of unblemished lives."\* But, they had spread certain books penned by Robert Browne against the Book of Common Prayer! And these books are pronounced—*seditionous*, because "they acknowledged her majesty's supremacy *civilly*, but not otherwise." Because they would not acknowledge the woman then on the throne of England to be head of the church of England, and possessed, lawfully, of the right to lord it over the consciences of her subjects, these good men must be dragged from their families, shut up in prison, and finally hanged like highwaymen. But the gallows could not drive them from their principles. They had found the truth in God's Word, and they would not sell it even to purchase life. They cheerfully sealed their testimony with their blood.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MARTYRDOM OF HENRY BARROWE, JOHN GREENWOOD, AND JOHN PENRY.

I have now to introduce to the reader two learned and excellent men, who held prominent places among the leaders of the rising sect. Their learning and piety, not less than the constancy of their sufferings, entitle them to honorable notice. They were not the followers of Browne, though believers in the same general principles of church polity, which they severally derived from a common source.

HENRY BARROWE was a lawyer; a man of genius and learning; an acute controversialist, of caustic wit, and un-

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\* Neal.

flinching boldness. The first notice which we have of this remarkable man—after whom our denomination were sometimes called *Barrowists*—is in 1586, when he and the Rev. John Greenwood were summoned before the high commissioners, charged with “schismatical and seditious opinions; namely: That our church is no church, or at least, no true church; yielding these reasons,—That the worship of the English church is flat idolatry: That we admit into our church persons unsanctified: That our preachers have no lawful [scriptural] calling: That our government [discipline] is ungodly: \* \* That the people of every parish ought to choose their bishop; and that every elder, though he be no doctor, nor pastor, is a bishop: \* \* That the child of ungodly parents ought not to be baptized,” etc.\* Barrowe refused the oath *ex officio*—or in other words—the oath by which he would have been made to criminate himself; but promised to answer truly such questions as he answered at all. He admitted the general correctness of the above charges as matters of fact; but denied their “seditious” tendency.

The following statement made by Barrowe himself, in answer to the archbishop’s articles of inquiry, will enable the reader to understand the opinions of this good man, upon several important points: “The Lord’s prayer, is in my opinion, rather a summary than an enjoined form; and, not finding it used by the apostles, I think it may not be constantly used.—In the word of God, I find no authority given to any man to impose liturgies, or forms of prayer, upon the church; and it is, therefore, high presumption to impose them.—In my opinion the Common Prayer is idola-

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\* Quoted by Hanbury, pp. 35, 36, from Sir George Paule, comptroller of archbishop Whitgift’s household.

trous, superstitious, and popish.—As the sacraments of the church of England are publicly administered, they are not true sacraments.—As the decrees and canons of the church are so numerous, I cannot judge of all; but many of the laws of the church of England, and the ecclesiastical courts and governors, are unlawful and antichristian.—Such as have been baptized in the church of England, are not baptized according to the institution of Christ; yet they may not need it again.—As it is now formed, the church of England is not the true church of Christ; yet there are many excellent Christians in it.—The queen is supreme governor of the whole land, and over the church bodies and goods; but may not make any other laws for the church of Christ than he hath left in his Word.—I cannot see it lawful for any prince to alter the least part of the judicial law of Moses, without doing injury to the moral law, and opposing the will of God.—No private persons may reform the *State*, [the question related to the church,] if any prince neglect it, but they ought to abstain from all unlawful things commanded by the prince.—The government of the church of Christ belongeth not to the ungodly, but every particular church ought to have an *eldership*.” [Presbytery is the word in the question.]

His examination resulted, in his committal to close prison; where, having been detained for some time, he was at length released, by giving bonds for his good behavior.

In July of 1588, he was again arrested, and sent to the Fleet; where he appears to have been kept a close prisoner for nearly five years; under circumstances of extreme cruelty; exposed to cold, and nakedness, and hunger, and the noisome pestilence of a close and crowded prison. A part of the time, at least, he was not permitted the use of pen and ink, nor the sight of his friends. He was closely



watched, and his person and his prison repeatedly searched, to prevent him from employing his able and caustic pen in refutation of his adversaries, and in defence of his own principles.

But, notwithstanding all these precautions to prevent his labors, if not to break down his spirit and destroy his life,—he contrived by stealth to use his pen. It was while thus confined and watched, that he wrote his remarkable work, entitled “A Brief Discovery of the False Church; Ezek. 16: 44. As the Mother, such the Daughter is. By the Lord’s most unworthy servant and witness, in bonds, Henry Barrowe,” 4to. pp. 263.\* In the Preface he tells the reader, that he could not “keep one sheet by him, while he was writing another.” In this work he takes the Word of God for his “warrant” and guide. He compares the church of England established by law, and red with the blood of saints, to the church of antichrist. “Let us” he says, “for the appeasing and assurance of our consciences, give heed to the Word of God, and by that golden reed measure our temple, our altar, and our worshippers; even by these rules whereby the apostles, those excellent, perfect workmen, planted and built the first churches.”† \* \* \*

He asserts the right of private judgment in every member of a church:—He declares that “every particular member hath power, yea, and ought to examine the manner of administering the sacraments; as also, the estate, disorder, or transgressions of the whole church:” \* \* Respecting the officers of the church he says: “The ministry appointed unto the government and service of the church of Christ, we find to be of two sorts; Elders, and Deacons.” The Book of Common Prayer he denounces in no mea-

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\* Hanbury, p. 39.

† Ibid. p. 40.

sured terms, and in no stinted language.—He says: “it is evident to be [that it is] abstracted out of the pope’s blasphemous Mass Book.” A declaration that cannot be gainsayed.

In passing he gives Presbyterianism a severe stroke. He seems to have cherished as little favor for “their set continued synods; their select classis of ministers; their settled supreme council,” or general assembly; as for the “ruinous and tyrannous kingdom” of the “pontifical priests:” “These Reformists” [the Presbyterians] he says, —“howsoever, for fashion’s sake, they give the People a little liberty, to sweeten their mouths, and make them believe that they should choose their own ministers; yet even in this pretended choice, do they cozen and beguile them also; leaving them nothing but the smoky, windy, title of election only;—enjoining them to choose some University clerk; one of these college-birds of their own brood; or else, comes a synod in the neck of them, and annihilates the election, whatsoever it be! They have also, a trick to stop it, before it come so far; namely, in the Ordination; which must, forsooth, needs be done by other priests;—for the church that chooseth him, hath no power to ordain him! And this makes the mother-church of Geneva, and the Dutch classis,—I dare not say the secret classis in England,—to make ministers for us in England.”\*

Another production of Barrowe’s pen during his imprisonment, was, a letter to an “honorable lady and countess, of his kindred,” describing his sufferings, and urging her to make efforts for his release. He tells her ladyship, that, “for books, written more than three years since, after near six year’s imprisonment,” he and four other brethren had

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\* Ut sup. pp. 46, 47.

been indicted, arraigned, condemned, and adjudged to suffer death as felons." He then describes what he and his companions had been made to suffer since their condemnation; doubtless for the purpose of shaking their firmness in the profession of the truth: "Upon the 24th [March 1592—3] early in the morning, was preparation made for our execution: We, brought out of the limbo [dungeon,] our irons smitten off, and we ready to be bound to the cart, when her majesty's most gracious pardon came for our reprieve."

After this feint, the bishops sent their emissaries to endeavor to shake the constancy of these faithful confessors. One of their number seems to have yielded; the other four remained firm. This letter contains the description of another most affecting scene, through which these good men were made to pass on their way to death: "Upon the last day of the third month [March], my brother Greenwood and I were very early and secretly conveyed to the place of execution; where, being tied by the necks to the tree, we were permitted to speak a few words \* \* Thus, craving pardon of all men whom we had any way offended, and freely forgiving the whole world, we used prayer for her majesty, the magistrates, people, and even for our adversaries. And having, both of us, almost finished our last words, behold, one was even at that instant come with a reprieve for our lives from her majesty; which was not only thankfully received of us, but with exceeding rejoicing and applause of all the people, both at the place of execution, and in the ways, streets, and houses, as we returned!"\*

This affecting letter was probably the last effort of Barrowe's pen. It was addressed to a relative who seems to

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\* Quoted by Hanbury, pp. 48, 49.

have had access to the queen's person, soliciting this lady to lay his case before her majesty. Whether this was done we know not. But this is on record, that the tyrannical and merciless archbishop Whitgift had intercepted a previous petition from this prisoner, addressed to the queen herself, and had exerted himself to keep the facts of Barrowe's case from the knowledge of her majesty.\* No wonder that this persecuted and abused prisoner was provoked to speak blunt and harsh truth of this haughty, passionate, ambitious, tyrannical, blood-thirsty prelate.†

On the 6th day of May, 1693, this fearless champion of scriptural truth, with his Christian brother Greenwood, was carried, for the third time to the place of execution, Tyburn; and there hanged, for the crime of non-conformity to the rites and ceremonies of the English church!! At their execution they displayed the same unshaken firmness which they had ever exhibited; and manifested the utmost loyalty towards the queen; praying earnestly for her long and prosperous reign.

Dr. Raynolds attended them in their last moments, of whom the queen sometime after inquired: "What he then thought of those two men, Henry Barrowe and John Green-

\* Neal, Vol. I. p. 527.

† On one of his examinations before the high commissioners, it being noticed that Barrowe did not pay the same respect to the archbishop and the bishop of London, as he did to the temporal lords, the lord chancellor Hatton, asked if he did not know these two men? pointing to the prelates: Barrowe replied, that he had cause to know them, but did not acknowledge them *lord bishops*. Being asked what he would call the archbishop; he replied: "*He is a monster! a miserable compound; I know not what to make of him. He is neither ecclesiastical nor civil; even that second beast spoken of in the Revelation, [Chap. xiii.]*"—Hanbury, p. 37; Neal, Vol. I. pp. 524, 525.

wood? He answered her majesty, that it could not avail anything to show his judgment concerning them, seeing they were put to death. And being loath to speak his mind further, her majesty charged him upon his allegiance to speak; whereupon he answered, *That he was persuaded, if they had lived, they would have been two as worthy instruments for the church of God, as have been raised up in this age.* Her majesty sighed, and said no more: but after that, riding to a park, near the place where they suffered death, called again to mind their suffering of death, and demanded of the earl of Cumberland, who was present when they suffered, what end they made? He answered, *'A very godly end; and prayed for your majesty, the state,' etc.*"\*

JOHN GREENWOOD, Barrowe's companion in tribulation, was a university scholar, and received his degree of B. A. in 1580. "He was chaplain to lord Rich; was married, and had 'a young son.'" He was first imprisoned in November, 1586, together with his friend and fellow collegian and fellow laborer Barrowe.†

He appears to have been arrested at midnight, and drag-

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\* Quoted by Hanbury, pp. 61, 62, from the preface of one of Barrowe's works re-printed after his death; Neal, Vol. I. pp. 524—527.—Neal puts the execution one month earlier—(6th April.) He does not seem to have been acquainted with Barrowe's letter to the countess; and mentions their being brought out for execution but *twice*, instead of *three* times.

† Neal, I. p. 524, says that "Barrowe was apprehended at the Clink Prison, in Southwack, where he went to visit his brother Greenwood." This would suggest, that they were not imprisoned at the same time: but their examinations were at the same time, and in November of the same year. — See back, p. 253, so that there could have been but little if any difference between the time at which the two friends were imprisoned.

ged from his bed to prison. He suffered the same rigorous treatment of which Barrowe complained, and for the same length of time—"well near six years." He was examined at or near the same time with Barrowe, and upon the same general interrogatories; and witnessed the same bold and Christian confession before his persecutors. His sentiments seem to have been very similar to those of his companion in tribulation for the Word's sake. He was a man of learning, an able controversialist, and an unflinching advocate for Congregational principles and doctrines. He was associated with his brother Barrowe in several controversial works. The first of his works, written about the year 1589—90, is an "Answer to George Giffard's pretended Defence of Read Prayers and Devised Liturgies; with the ungodly Cavils and wicked Slanders comprised in the first part of his Book, intituled, A short Treatise against the Donatists of England." Greenwood styles himself—"Christ's poor afflicted Prisoner in the Fleet, at London, for the Truth of the Gospel." In this treatise he distinctly disclaims any discipleship with Browne. "What opinion the 'Brownists' hold of the Church of England, their worship, people, ministry, government,—we," says Greenwood, "neither know nor regard: neither is there any cause why we should be charged or condemned for their errors and faults."\* He speaks in terms of severity against "the malignant church" of England. He calls upon God's people to come out of her, lest they communicate in her sins, and receive of her plagues. "Let her shipmasters, then, her mariners, merchantmen, enchanters, and false prophets, utter and retail her wares, deck and adorn her with the scarlet, purple, gold, silver, jewels, and ornaments of the true Tabernacle: let them, in her, offer up their sacrifices, their beasts, sheep,

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\* Hanbury, Chap. 4. p. 66.

meal, wine, oil ; their odours, ointments, and frankincense : let them daub and undershore her ; build and reform her ; until the storm of the Lord's wrath break forth ;" \* \* " But let the wise, that are warned and see the evil, fear and depart from the same ; so shall they preserve their own souls as a prey : and the Lord shall bring them amongst his redeemed, to Zion, ' with praise,' and ' everlasting joy' shall be upon their heads ; ' they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.'" \*

The next year he produced another work—against " Mr. Giffard's supposed consimilitude betwixt the Donatists and us ; wherein it is showed how his Arguments have been and may be, by the Papists, more justly retorted against himself, and the present estate of their church. By Jo. Greenwood, 1591." Giffard appears to have been a conforming Puritan. He fell into rough hands when he attacked Barrowe and Greenwood ; and had occasion to remember the wise man's saying, before he was through with the controversy : " He that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears." Greenwood says : " You term us Brownists and Donatists ; whereas *I never conversed with the men nor their writings !* I detest Donatus' heresies. And if they had been instruments to teach us any truth, we were not therefore to be named with their names ; *we were baptized into Christ's.* Browne is a member of *your* church ; *your* brother, and all the Brownists do frequent *your* assemblies."

Greenwood's object seems to have been, to throw off from himself and his friends the obloquy of a bad name. He tacitly admits that he held some sentiments in common with Donatus and Browne ;—indeed, he could not, in truth, have

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\* Ib. pp. 66, 67.

denied this ; but he insists that his sentiments were derived not from either of these men, but from the Word of God.

In connection with the above treatises of Greenwood should be mentioned “ A Plain Refutation of Mr. Giffard’s Book, intituled ‘ A short Treatise ’gainst the Donatists of England,” by Henry Barrowe. And, a “ Brief Sum of the Causes of our Separation, etc.” And two other works upon the same controversy. These several works seem to have been written, if not jointly by the two prisoners and friends, yet by mutual agreement ; and by mutual assistance ; and present the views of both of these witnesses to the truth ; the sincerity of whose testimony was finally sealed with their blood, as already related ; for, as in sentiment they were united, in suffering and death they were not divided.

In respect to what Greenwood says of the Brownists attending the assemblies of the national church ; he must, I think, refer to Browne’s personal and immediate friends and followers ; who might be so far influenced by his example, as to yield an outward conformity to the Church of England by attending upon her public worship, as did very many of the Puritans, who were inclined to Presbyterianism. Many devout men hesitated to separate totally, even from a very corrupt church, so long as the doctrinal articles of that church were sound and scriptural. But, Barrowe, and Greenwood, and many others, were, for an entire separation from the English hierarchy ; on the ground, that it was an essentially corrupt and antichristian establishment :— That the Church of England was no better than *a daughter* of the “ Mother of Harlots.” They argued their right to separate from the English church on the same general principles which the Reformers urged to justify their separation from the Romish church. Greenwood argues most conclu-



sively upon this point. To Giffard's objection against a separation, That the Church of England held sound doctrinal sentiments, and that she was "esteemed and revered as a sister" by the foreign reformed churches; Greenwood thus replies: "Now hold to your argument, and see what will follow: The Church of Rome hath the same Confession of Faith, which you call your Apostolic Creed, that you have; yea, the Lord's Prayer, as you call it; 'Athanasius' Creed, etc.; therefore, they and you agreeing in this *harmony* of confession, are one body, one church! Again; these churches, you say, hold *you* 'the church of God;' and *you* hold the *Church of Rome* to be the church of God, therefore you are one body all; and then you and all the churches [are] schismatics from your mother church."

Such an argument must have choked poor Giffard. It was *ad rem*, if not *ad hominem*: it was an effectual turning of the enemy's guns upon himself.

### *The Separatists.*

In regard to the *name* of the rising sect;—a subject on which both of the writers under review, and others of a later date displayed considerable sensitiveness;—it should be remarked, That a name is of more importance than, at first thought, might be supposed. Browne's name had become notorious throughout the kingdom, and even on the Continent, as a violent, immoral apostate; and the community generally, without discriminating between the speculative opinions and the moral conduct of the man, would be ready to judge all who bore his name, as followers, by the known character of the man himself. For this reason, the Separatists were anxious to throw off the obloquy of Browne's bad name. And, further: the truth seems to have been, that Browne was by no means the father of the rising sect. In-

deed, they called no man master : they took the Word of God for their only infallible guide. Browne was merely one of thousands in different parts of England who had embraced substantially the same views of church polity. The peculiarities of the man, and perhaps the policy of some of Elizabeth's ministers of state, caused Browne to be better known, for a season, than any other of the same way of thinking.\* But, as we have seen, the seed of Congregationalism had long been vegetating in the nation ; and other and better men than Browne had learned the truth by an independent investigation of the Scriptures. Two of the leading minds concerned in this controversy we have already noticed ; others will be noticed in the sequel. To distinguish the rising sect from the Puritans who conformed to the church, and were called the "*Conformable Puritans* ;" and the Brownists, whose leader had outwardly apostatized, and whose immediate followers were, to some extent, influenced by his example—The men whose sentiments are exhibited in the writings of Barrowe and Greenwood, and their associates—were styled THE SEPARATION OR THE SEPARATISTS ; because they utterly separated themselves from the fellowship of the Church of England as an anti-christian Establishment. I note this here, because it was about the time of which I am now treating (1592—3) that this name was given to the advocates of Congregationalism : and by this name they will be called for some time forward in this history.

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\* Cecil, lord Burleigh, bore no great friendship towards the tyrannical power of the bishops ; and, to thwart and embarrass them, he is believed to have secretly countenanced his kinsman Browne ; and to have protected him, covertly, from the fury of the church. — See Hanbury, Chap. 11 *passim* ; Hume's *Elizab.* Vol. III, Chap. 40. pp. 57, 58.

*Martyrdom of Rev. John Penry.*

JOHN PENRY, or Ap Henry, was another martyr to the principles of Congregational Dissent. The story of his persecution and death, is, perhaps, the most affectingly interesting one in the annals of our history. Even Hume sets it down as a case of unparalleled atrocity.\*

Penry was born in Wales, at Brecknock ; he entered at Cambridge, but graduated at Oxford, from whence he received his degree of M. A. in 1586 : and immediately entered the gospel ministry. Strype calls him, “ a pious and learned man, well disposed to religion.” “ He preached in both universities with applause ; and afterwards, travelling into Wales, was the first that preached the gospel publicly to the Welch.” †

About the year 1588 he published two works, setting forth the necessity of a reformation of abuses in Wales ; and urging the importance of having the gospel preached more faithfully in that country. On the publication of certain satirical pamphlets against the bishops, in 1590, (I refer to the Mar-Prelate pamphlets,) Penry, for some reason, was suspected to be their author, though wrongfully ; ‡ and warrants were immediately issued for his apprehension. To avoid them—for a man’s innocence was no protection from the High-Commission Inquisition—he fled into Scotland ; where he remained till 1593. After which, venturing into England, he was immediately arrested as an enemy to the state—a common charge against those who would not

\* Elizab. App. 3. pp. 253, 254. † Neal, I. Chap. 8. p. 528.

‡ Hume, Elizab. App. 3. p. 254, unhesitatingly ascribes Martin Mar-Prelate and other works of the same description to Penry, but Martin himself clears Penry fully from the charge ; and Penry himself denied the authorship. — See Hanbury, p. 80, note *a.* and p. 79, note *f.*

bow the knee to the lord bishops of the land. On his person, or in his possession, were found certain manuscript notes touching ecclesiastical matters, made by Penry during his residence in Scotland, drawn up in the form of an address to her Majesty, complaining of the rigorous and anti-christian character of her government, and pointing out various ecclesiastical abuses which called loudly for reformation. On these papers, though never published—and though it could not be proved that their author ever intended to publish them—Penry was tried and condemned. His case is one of so much interest, as developing the spirit of the times, and the merciless rigor with which our religious ancestors were persecuted, that I shall feel warranted in quoting somewhat freely from the writings of this interesting young man, from which the reader may gather many particulars touching the history, character, and sufferings of the martyr. And first, I will quote from a “*Protestation before his Death*,” addressed by the victim to the lord treasurer.

*Penry's Protestation.*

“I am a poor young man, born and bred in the mountains of Wales. I am the first, since the last springing of the Gospel in this latter age, that publicly labored to have the blessed seed thereof sown in those barren mountains. I have often rejoiced before my God, as he knoweth, that I had the favour to be born and live under her Majesty, for the promoting this work. . . And being now to end my days, before I am come to the one half of my years, in the likely course of nature, I leave the success of my labours unto such of my countrymen as the Lord is to raise after me, for the accomplishing of that work which, in the calling of my country unto the knowledge of Christ's blessed Gospel, I be-

gan. . . An enemy unto any good order and policy, either in Church or Commonwealth, was I never. All good learning and knowledge of the arts and tongues I laboured to attain unto, and to promote unto the uttermost of my power. Whatsoever I wrote in Religion, the same I did simply, for no other end than for the bringing of God's Truth to light. I never did any thing in this Cause (Lord, thou art witness!) for contention, vain glory, or to draw disciples after me; or to be accounted singular. Whatsoever I wrote or held beside the warrant of the *written Word*, I have always warned all men to leave. And wherein I saw that I had erred myself, I have, as all this Land doth now know, confessed my ignorance, and framed my judgment and practice according to the truth of the Word. . . Far be it, that either the saving of an earthly life; the regard which in nature I ought to have to the desolate outward state of a poor friendless widow, and four poor fatherless infants, whereof the eldest is not above four years old, which I am to leave behind me; or any other outward thing, should enforce me, by the denial of God's Truth, contrary to my conscience, to leese [*sic*] my own soul. The Lord, I trust, will never give me over unto this sin. Great things in this life I never sought for, not so much as in thought. A mean and base outward state, according to my mean condition, I was content with. Sufficiency I have had, with great outward troubles; but most contented I was with my lot; and content I am, and shall be, with my undeserved and untimely death: beseeching the Lord, that it be not laid to the charge of any creature in this land. For I do, from my heart, forgive all those that seek my life, as I desire to be forgiven in the day of strict account; praying for them as for my own soul, that although upon earth we cannot accord, we may yet meet in heaven unto our eternal comfort

and unity ; where all controversies shall be at an end. . . Many such subjects I wish unto my Prince ; though no such reward unto any of them. . . Subscribed with the heart and the hand, which never devised or wrote any thing to the discredit or defamation of my Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth : I take it on my death, as I hope to have a life after this. — By me JOHN PENRY.”

His sentiments, which were denounced as so abhorrent to the principles of good government, and for which he was hunted down, and butchered by the bishops’ dogs ; are briefly exhibited in one of his treatises on Reformation ; published some time before his apprehension.—“ I am accounted,” he says, “ an enemy unto our *State*, for no other suspicion and colour, but only because I have, by public writing, laboured to defend and induce in our Church, that uniform order of church-regiment, which our Saviour, Christ, hath ordained in his Word, to continue perpetually therein ; and also, have endeavoured to seek the utter ruin and overthrow of that wicked hierarchy of Lord Bishops, together with whatsoever corruption dependeth thereupon. Now, that I cannot be charged of enmity to our State for any other cause than this which I have expressed, I make it clear in that my bringing up, having been all the days of my life at my studies, I never as yet dealt in any cause, more or less, that any ways concerneth the civil state and government. . . And therefore whatsoever enemies the Lord hath raised up against me—a contemptible worm—for the maintenance of his truth, be they noble or unnoble, councillors or inferior men, I am so far from fearing their power, that the more I see them rage, the greater strength I see reached unto me by the Lord’s free mercies, to stand to the Truth which they rave against.” . . “ Where I say, that professors should labor strongly to have our hierarchy and contempti-

ble idols rooted out of our Church, my meaning is, not that any private strength should so much as lift up a hand, much less use any violence against these caterpillars ; but I mean, that we should more vehemently labour with the Lord by prayers, and by reforming ourselves and our families, and deal earnestly with her Majesty and their Honors that our cause may be equally heard." . .

Though I have already quoted somewhat freely from the writings of this estimable man, I cannot persuade myself to withhold his parting address—" *To the distressed, faithful Congregation of Christ in London, and all the members thereof, whether in bonds or at liberty,—These be delivered :*"

" My beloved Brethren, Mr. F. Johnson, Mr. D. S., etc., with the rest of you, both men and women ; as if I particularly named you all, which stand Members of this poor afflicted Congregation, whether at liberty, or in bonds ; Jesus Christ, that great King and Prince of the kings of the earth, bless you, comfort you with His invincible Spirit, that you may be able to bear and overcome these great Trials which you are yet, and I with you, if I live,—to undergo for his Name's sake in this Testimony.

" Beloved,—Let us think our lot and portion more than blessed, that now are vouchsafed the favor not only to know and profess, but also to suffer for the sincerity of the Gospel ; and let us remember, that great is our reward in heaven, if we endure unto the end.

" I testify unto you for mine own part, as I shall answer before Jesus Christ and his elect angels, that I never saw any truth more clear and undoubted than this witness wherein we stand, 1. Against false Offices ; 2. the Callings ; 3. the Works ; 4. the Maintenance left and retained, in this Land, by and from Popery ; 5. against the Obedience

which spiritually, either in soul or in body, is yielded ; and, the Communion that is had, with these inventions of darkness ; 6. the Mingling of all sorts, in these Assemblies ; 7. the Worship done, but scant, in one of the three parts of the Commission given by our Saviour ; scant done, I say, in one of the three parts of the Commission, by the best Teachers of this Land. And I thank my God, I am not only ready to be bound and banished, but even to die in this Cause, by His strength ; yea, my Brethren, I greatly long, in regard of myself, to be dissolved, and to live in the blessed Kingdom of Heaven, with Jesus Christ and his angels ; with Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, David, Jeremy, Daniel, Paul the great apostle of the Gentiles, and the rest of the holy Saints, both men and women : with the glorious kings, prophets, and martyrs, and witnesses of Jesus Christ, that have been from the beginning of the world ; particularly with my two dear Brethren, Mr. Henry Barrowe, and Mr. John Greenwood, which have, last of all, yielded their blood for this precious ‘ Testimony : ’ confessing unto you, my Brethren and Sisters, that if I might live upon the earth the days of Methuselah twice told, and that in no less comfort than Peter, James, and John, were in the mount ; and, after this life, might be sure of ‘ the Kingdom of Heaven ; ’ that yet, to gain all this, I durst not go from the former ‘ Testimony.’

“ Wherefore, my Brethren, I beseech you be of like mind herein with me. I doubt not but you have the same ‘ precious faith ’ with me ; and are partakers also of far more glorious comfort than my barren and sinful soul can be. Strive for me, and with me, that the Lord our God may make me, and us all, able to end our course with joy and patience. Strive also, that He may stay his blessed hand, if it be his good pleasure, and not make any further breach



in His church, by the taking away of any more of us as yet, to the discouraging of the weak, and the lifting up of the horn of our adversaries.

“ I would indeed, if it be His good pleasure, live yet with you, to help you to bear that grievous and hard yoke which yet ye are like to sustain, either here, or in a strange land.

“ And, my good Brethren, seeing banishment, with loss of goods, is likely to betide you all, prepare yourselves for this hard entreaty ; and rejoice that you are made worthy for Christ’s cause, to suffer, and bear all these things. And, I beseech you, ‘ in the bowels of Jesus Christ,’ that none of you, in this case, look upon his particular estate ; but regard the general state of the Church of God, that the same may go, and be kept together, whithersoever it shall please God to send you. Oh, the blessing will be great that shall ensue this care ; whereas if you go every man to provide for his own house, and to look for his own family,—first neglecting poor Sion ; the Lord will set his face against you, and scatter you from the one end of heaven to the other ; neither shall you find a resting-place for the soles of your feet, or a blessing upon any thing you take in hand !

“ The Lord, my Brethren and Sisters, hath not forgotten to be gracious unto Sion ; you shall yet find days of peace and of rest, if you continue faithful. This stamping and treading of us under his feet, this subverting of our cause and right in judgment, is done by Him, to the end that we should search and try our ways, and repent us of our carelessness, profaneness and rebellion in his sight : but he will yet maintain the cause of our souls, and redeem our lives, if we return to him : yea, he will be with us in fire and water, and will not forsake us, if our hearts be only ” [*misprint in our copy,*] “ and especially of the building of Sion, whithersoever we go.

“Let not those of you, then, that either have stocks in your hands, or some likely trades to live by, dispose of yourselves where it may be most commodious for your outward estate, and, in the mean time, suffer the poor ones that have no such means, either to bear the whole work upon their weak shoulders, or to end their days in sorrow and mourning, for want of outward and inward comforts, in the land of strangers ; for the Lord will be an avenger of all such dealings. But consult with the whole Church, yea, with the Brethren of other places, how the Church may be kept together and built, whithersoever they go. Let not the poor and the friendless be forced to stay behind here, and to break a good conscience for want of your support and kindness unto them, that they may go with you.

“And here, I humbly beseech you,—not in any outward regard, as I shall answer before my God,—that you would take my poor and desolate widow, and my mess of fatherless and friendless orphans, with you into exile, whithersoever you go ; and you shall find, I doubt not, that the blessed promises of my God made unto me and mine will accompany them, and even the whole Church, for their sakes ; for this also is the Lord’s promise unto the holy seed ; as you shall not need much to demand what they shall eat, or wherewith they shall be clothed ; and in short time, I doubt not but they will be found helpful and not burthensome to the Church : only, I beseech you, let them not continue after you in this land, where they must be forced to go again unto Egypt ; and my God will bless you even with a joyful return into your own country for it. There are of you who, I doubt not, will be careful of the performance of the will of your dead Brother, in this point, who may yet live to show this kindness unto yours : I will say no more.

“Be kind, loving, and tender-hearted, the one of you to-

wards the other ; labor every way to increase love, and to show the duties of love one of you towards another ; by visiting, comforting, and relieving one the other ; even for ‘ the reproach of the heathen ’ that are round about us, as the Lord saith. Be watching in prayer : especially remember those of our Brethren that are especially endangered ; particularly those our two Brethren, Mr. Studley and Robert Bowl, whom our God hath strengthened now to stand in the forefront of the battle. I fear me, that our carelessness was over great to sue unto our God for the lives of these two so notable lights of His Church who now rest with him ; and that as He took them away for many respects seeming good to his wisdom ; so also, that we might learn to be more careful in prayer in all such causes. Pray for them then, my Brethren ; and for our Brother Mr. FRANCIS JOHNSON ; and for me, who am likely to end my days either with them, or before them ; that our God may spare us unto his Church, if it be his good pleasure, or give us exceeding faithfulness : and be every way comfortable unto the sister and wife of the dead ; I mean, unto my beloved M. Barrowe and M. Greenwood ; whom I most heartily salute, and desire much to be comforted in their God ; who, by his blessings from above, will countervail unto them the want of so notable a brother and a husband.

“I would wish you, earnestly, to write, yea to send, if you may, to comfort the Brethren in the West and North countries, that they faint not in these troubles ; and that also you may have of their advice, and they of yours, what to do in these desolate times. And if you think it anything for their further comfort and direction, send them, conveniently, a copy of this my Letter, and of the Declaration of my faith and allegiance ; wishing them, before whomsoever they be called, that their own mouths be not had in

witness against them, in anything. Yea, I would wish you and them to be together, if you may, whithersoever you shall be banished ; and to this purpose, to bethink you beforehand where to be ; yea, to send some who may be meet to prepare you some resting-place. And, be all of you assured, that He who is your God in England, will be your God in any land under the whole heaven ; for the earth and the fulness thereof are His, and blessed are they that for his Cause are bereaved of any part of the same.

“ Finally, my Brethren, the Eternal God bless you and yours, that I may meet with you all, unto my comfort, in the blessed Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, having from my heart, and with tears, performed, it may be, my last duty towards you in this life, I salute you all in the Lord, both men and women ; even those whom I have not named, as heartily as those whose names I have mentioned ; for all your names I know not. And, remember to stand steadfast and faithful in Jesus Christ, as you have received him, unto your immortality ; and may He confirm and establish you to the end, for the praise of his glory. Amen.

“ Your loving Brother in the patience and sufferings of the Gospel, John Penry ; a Witness of Christ in this life, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.”

“ The twenty-fourth of the fourth month, April, 1593.”

This affecting Christian letter was doubtless the last labor of Penry's hand. He was condemned on the 21st of May, and on the 29th of the same month the warrant for his execution was signed—archbishop Whitgift being the first to set his name to the instrument—and sent to the sheriff ; who, on the same day, erected the gallows, and sent word to the prisoner while at dinner, that he must prepare to die that afternoon. He was accordingly hurried into the cart,

and driven to the place of execution. "The fellow" was forbidden to address the people, or to make any profession of his faith towards God, or of loyalty to the queen,—lest he should further confirm the growing favor of the populace for these persecuted Christians the Separatists, and deepen the increasing enmity of the people against the bishops.—"He was turned off in a hurry, about five of the clock, in the evening, May 29th 1593, in the thirty-fourth year of his age."\*

I have dwelt longer on this affecting case of persecution and death, because, in addition to its intrinsic interest, the very violence of it proved the instrument in God's hands of stopping, for a season, the effusion of blood, and the sacrifice of life for the truth's sake. Public indignation became so loud against the bishops and their high commission associates, that, they deemed it unadvisable openly, to put any more to death for the crime of denying their lordly and tyrannical power.† Penry was the last of the Congregational martyrs.‡ From this date the "wily ecclesiastics" substituted for death by the common hangman,—banishment, and imprisonment, and stripes, and branding with hot

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\* Neal, Vol. I. Chap. 8. p. 534; Hanbury, p. 82.

† An Arian and a Baptist were executed in March 1611—12, which are believed to have been the last victims of ecclesiastical tyranny who were openly murdered in England.—Neal, Vol. II. pp. 118, 119; Prince.

‡ Neal, (His New Eng. Vol. I. p. 71,) tells us, that—Besides Thacker and Copping, and Barrowe, Greenwood and Penry, there was one William Dennis executed at Thetford, in Norfolk county, about this time, "on the same account; and a great many poor families utterly ruined by severe fines and imprisonments." And Francis Johnson, in Hanbury (p. 103) tells us, that Daniel Studley, one of the elders of the London church, was "first adjudged to death, in 1593, afterward exiled."

irons upon the face, and the slitting of noses, and gagging, and sawing off of the ears, and such like *Christian* chastisements, for the purpose of reducing the unruly advocates of a scriptural church polity, to episcopal conformity. But, bonds and imprisonment, stripes and maiming, cold and nakedness, banishment and exile, were all, all alike, in vain. Multitudes were willing to buy the truth even at such ruinous costs. They preferred the comfort of a good conscience in a dungeon, to the outward advantages of conformity to a worldly and anti-scriptural hierarchy.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE FIRST ORGANIZED CHURCH OF THE SEPARATISTS, 1592.

We have already contemplated the abortive efforts of Robert Browne and his followers to establish a church upon their favorite principles, at Middleburgh. After the breaking up of their church, and the apostasy of their leader, we have no evidence that the Brownists, as such, ever attempted a re-organization. From some hints which are given by Barrowe, and Finch, and others, we are led to the conclusion that many of the Brownists followed the example of their leader, so far at least, as to attend the Common-Prayer worship of the land. Others doubtless—and those the better part—consorted with such men as Barrowe, and Greenwood, and Penry, and other excellent men, of whom some account will be given to the reader in due time. These all built upon the same common foundation on which Browne had erected his system ;—Jesus Christ being their chief corner stone, and the Scriptures their only law-book.

It was somewhere about October, 1592, that the persecuted Separatists ventured to organize a Congregational church in the city of London. This interesting transaction is described as having taken place "in the house of one Fox,\* in St. Nicholas' Lane, London," \* \* "Or at Mr. Bilson's house in Cree Church," when Master Francis Johnson was chosen pastor; and Mr. Greenwood doctor; and Bowman and Lee, deacons; and Studley and George Kniston, apothecary, were chosen elders, \* \* all in one day, by their congregation." \* \* "Being there present, the said Dan. Studley, Will. Shepherd, Will. Marshal, Joh. Becke, with the names of a great many more, with some women."

The above is extracted from the examination of Daniel Buck, himself one of this congregation, who was arraigned before "three magistrates" for his non-conformity and absence from his parish church.

The prisoner being further asked—"What vow, or promise, he had made when he came first into their society?" answered, "He made this protestation. That he would walk with the rest of the congregation so long as they did walk in the way of the Lord, and as far as might be war-

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\* Fox seems to have kept a sort of public house—*An Ordinary*. Hanbury informs us, that there was, as late as 1834, a court-yard in Nicholas Lane, with these words over the entrance—"FOXES ORDINARY, REBUILT 1686."—Whether Fox himself was a Separatist or not, the congregation would be likely to prefer a public house for their meetings if they could find a worthy landlord, because the going in and out of many people would be less likely to attract notice from neighbors or passers-by. Francis Johnson had a brother who kept a school, probably in one part of Fox's house. His brother was a Separatist; and it is not unlikely that his school-room was the place where the church was formed. He was afterwards arrested and imprisoned.

ranted by the Word of God." A most christian protestation, surely ! The same witness further testified, that at the time and place of the organization of the church, " the sacrament of baptism was, as he called it, delivered there to the number of seven persons, by Johnson." " But they had neither godfathers nor godmothers. And he took water, and washed the faces of them that were baptized. The children that were there baptized, were the children of Mr. Studley, Mr. Lee, with others, being of several years of age ; saying only in the administration of this sacrament, ' I do baptize thee in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; ' without using any other ceremony therein, as is now usually observed according to the Book of Common Prayer."

" Being further demanded, The manner of the Lord's supper administered among them ? He saith, That five white loaves or more, were set upon the table. That the pastor did break the bread, and then delivered it to some of them, and the deacons delivered to the rest ; some of the congregation sitting, and some standing about the table. And, That the pastor delivered the cup unto one, and he to another, till they had all drunken : using the words at the delivery thereof according as it is set down in the eleventh of [the first Epistle to the] Corinthians, the 24th verse. Being demanded, Whether they used to make a collection or gathering among them ? said, That there is a gathering of money among them. The which money is delivered to the deacons, to be distributed according to their directions, to the use of the poor. And, he heard say, That they did use to marry in their congregation.'"\*

This most interesting and authentic account of the organization and worship of this earliest of modern Congrega-

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\* Hanbury, pp. 85, 86, from Strype, Vol. IV. p. 174.



tional churches furnishes matter for much reflection. How simple, how primitive, how apostolical were all these proceedings ! Who is not carried back in his imagination to those days when the despised and persecuted followers of Jesus of Nazareth—the Separatists of their day—were accustomed to assemble in a private house, with closed doors, through fear of the Jews ; thus to worship Christ as God, and to eat and drink in commemoration of his dying love ?

Some further light is shed upon the character and conduct of these lovers of scriptural simplicity, by the testimony of a bitter enemy : who, in a work entitled “ *The Brownist’s Synagogue*,”\* etc., thus describes their meetings and worship :

“ In that house where they intend to meet, there is one appointed to keep the door, for the intent, to give notice if there should be any insurrection, warning may be given them. They do not flock together, but come two or three in a company ; any man may be admitted thither ; and all being gathered together, the man appointed to teach stands in the midst of the room, and his audience gather about him. He prayeth about the space of half an hour ; and part of his prayer is, that those which came thither to scoff and laugh, God would be pleased to turn their hearts ; by which means they think to escape undiscovered. His sermon is about the space of an hour, and then doth another stand up to make the text more plain ; and at the latter end, he entreats them all to go home severally, lest, the next meeting, they should be interrupted by those which are of the opinion of the wicked. They seem very steadfast in their opinions, and say, ‘ rather than they will turn, they will burn.’ ” p. 5.

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\* See Hanbury, *ut sup.* Note *a.*

An account, coming from an enemy, no way discreditable to our pious and suffering ancestors.

The little church of despised believers were not permitted long to enjoy their dearly bought privileges. The spies of the bishops were on the alert. And, though the church frequently changed the place of meeting; going from house to house; and sometimes leaving the city, and resorting to the woods;—yet, they were discovered by the bishop of London's spies, as early as the 3d of April, 1593, on a Lord's day, as they were assembled at Islington, a village near London, in a public house; the very same place in which the congregation of "Gaspellus," of which Cuthbert Sympson was deacon, were discovered in the reign of Mary.\* Of the number present, there were seized and sent two by two to the different gaols about London, "about some *fifty-six* persons." These persons, as they declared to the Council, were "hearing the Word of God truly taught, praying, and praising God for all his favors showed unto us, and to her Majesty, your Honors, [this is part of a petition addressed to the Council by the imprisoned Separatists] and the whole land; desiring our God to be merciful unto us, and unto our gracious princess and country: being employed in these holy actions, and no other, as the parties who disturbed us can testify. They were taken in the very same place where the persecuted church and martyrs were enforced to use the like exercise in Queen Mary's days."†

These persons, at their examination, confessed, that for several years they had been accustomed to meet at five o'clock in the morning, in the summer season, in the fields or woods; and in the winter at private houses, to spend the Lord's day as above described. That their habit was,

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\* See back p. 220.

† Hanbury, pp. 88, 89.

to continue all day together engaged in religious exercises : and, at the close, to take up a collection to defray the expenses of the meeting ; and to help their brethren who were in prison.\*

This ingenuous christian confession had no effect upon their judges. The prisoners were remanded to their prisons. These added to the number who were already incarcerated, made the sum total of the Separatists “ within the prisons about London,—not to speak of other gaols throughout the land,—about *three score and twelve* persons, men and women, young and old, lying in cold, in hunger, in dungeons, in irons !”†

What an exhibition of cruelty on the one hand, and of suffering on the other, is here furnished us ! *Seventy-two* persons—young and old, men and women—confined in loathsome gaols, among the basest malefactors, suffering extreme cruelty, for meeting on the Lord’s day in the woods, or in private houses, to spend the whole day in prayer and religious exercises, without a printed book to guide them, or a Popish square cap, surplice, and cope, and tippet, to annoy them !

But I must let them speak again of their hard usage. In another petition which these sufferers addressed to the Council : They reminded their lordships, that besides such of them as were undergoing “ miserable usage” in the Fleet prison, some of their fraternity were “ *laden with as many irons as they could bear*” in Newgate ; others were confined “ among the most facinorous and vile persons ; where it is lamentable to relate how many of these inno-

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\* See Neal, I. p. 517, from Strype.

† I quote the language of the sufferers themselves.—Hanbury, ut. Sup.

cents have perished within these five years, and of these, some aged widows, aged men, and young maidens, etc. ;” others had been “ grievously beaten with cudgels” in bride-well, and cast into a place there, called Little Ease, for refusing to attend their chapel-service. “ Upon none,” they continue, thus committed by the prelates, and dying in their prisons, “ is any search or inquest suffered to pass, as by law in like case is provided.”\*

In another place the sufferers suggest their apprehension, that the bishops intended “ *to imprison them unto death, as they have done seventeen or eighteen others, in the same noisome gaols, within these six years.*”

They complain bitterly of the outrageous treatment to which they were exposed out of prison and in. Speaking of the bishop of London and “ that whole lineage,” they say : “ Their unbridled slanders ; their lawless privy-searches ; their violent breaking open and rifling our houses ; their lamentable and barbarous usage of women and young children in these hostile assaults, and ever robbing and taking away whatsoever they think meet from us : . . their dealing this way towards us, is so woful, Right Honorable, as we may truly demand with grief of heart, whether the foreign enemy, or our own native countrymen, do possess and bear rule over us in our dear and native country ! . . Bishop Bonner, Story, Weston, dealt not after this sort ; for those whom they committed close, they brought them, in short space, openly into Smithfield, to end their misery, and to begin their never-ending joy ; whereas Bishop Elmor [Aylmore], Doctor Stanhope, and Mr. Justice Young, with the rest of that persecuting and blood-thirsty faculty, will do neither of these. . .

“ There are many of us, by the mercies of God, still out

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\* Hanbury, p. 88.

of their hands : . . we have as good warrant to reject the ordinances of Antichrist, and labor for the recovery of Christ's holy ordinances, as our fathers in Queen Mary's days. . .

“Are we malefactors? Are we anywise undutiful to our Prince? Maintain we any errors? Let us, then, be judicially convicted thereof, and delivered to the civil authority. But let not these bloody men both accuse, condemn, and close murder us, after this sort; contrary to all law, equity, and conscience; where, alone, they are the plaintiff, the accusers, the judges, and the executioners of their most fearful barbarous tyranny! They should not, by the laws of the land, go any further, in cases of Religion, than their own Ecclesiastical Censures, and then refer us to the Civil Powers. Their forefathers, Gardener, Bonner, Story, dealt thus equally; and we crave but their equity. Oh, let her excellent Majesty our Sovereign, and your Wisdoms, consider and accord unto us this our just Petition. . .

“We crave for all of us, but liberty either to die openly, or to live openly in the land of our nativity. If we deserve death, it beseemeth the Magistrates of Justice not to see us closely murdered; . . if we be guiltless, we crave but the benefit of our innocency, that we may have peace to serve God and our Prince, in the place and sepulchres of our fathers.

“Thus protesting our innocency; complaining of violence and wrong; and crying for Justice on the behalf, and in the name of that Righteous Judge—the God of Equity and Justice,—we continue our prayers unto Him for her Majesty, and your Honors.”\*

It was among these afflicted and tormented Christians that Barrowe, and Greenwood, and Penry suffered so long :

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\* Hanbury, pp. 89, 90.

one of whom described his own sufferings and those of his companions thus : “ These bloody men (the ecclesiastical commissioners) will allow us neither meat, drink, fire, lodging ; nor suffer any whose hearts the Lord would stir up for our relief, to have any access to us : by which means seventeen or eighteen have perished in the noisome gaols, within these six years ; some of us had not one penny about us when we were sent to prison, nor anything to procure a maintenance for ourselves and families, but our handy labor and trades ; by which means, not only we ourselves, but our families and children are undone and starved. \* \* That which we crave for us all, is the liberty to die openly, or live openly in the land of our nativity : if we deserve death, let us not be closely murdered, yea starved to death, with hunger and cold, and stifled in loathsome dungeons.”

“ Among those who perished in prison during this persecution,” says Neal, “ was one Mr. Roger Rippon, who, dying in Newgate, his fellow prisoners put this inscription upon his coffin :”—

*“ This is the corpse of Roger Rippon, a servant of Christ, and her majesty’s faithful subject, who is the last of sixteen or seventeen which that great enemy of God, the archbishop of Canterbury, [Whitgift] with his high commissioners, have murdered in Newgate, within these five years, manifestly for the testimony of Jesus Christ : his soul is now with the Lord, and his blood cried (crieth ?) for speedy vengeance against that great enemy of the saints, and against Mr. Richard Young [a justice of the peace in London—a bishop’s tool—] who, in this, and many the like points, hath abused his power for the upholding of the Romish antichrist, prelacy, and priesthood. He died A. D. 1592.”\**

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\* His. Pur. Vol. I. p. 520 ; Hanbury, p. 90.

The houses of the suspected Separatists were broken open and ransacked in the night, without so much as a warrant for the deed ; their property plundered ; and themselves hurried to prison, and to death ; for no other crime than that of meeting together, as did the primitive disciples, and " spending the whole day in prayer, expounding the Scriptures, and other religious exercises."

To cover the cruelty of their proceedings, the bishops accused the Separatists of seditious designs against the State. But nothing of this kind could ever be proved against them. They perseveringly protested their loyalty ; and some of those who were publicly executed, (as we have seen) commended their sovereign to God with their expiring breath.\*

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\* Hume intimates, (Vol. III. p. 58) that the "*political speculations, and the principles of civil liberty,*" which the Puritans entertained, " rendered them in a peculiar manner the objects of Elizabeth's aversion." It is not improbable that this politic princess perceived the *tendency* of Puritan principles, and particularly, of the Separatist's principles towards civil liberty ; but after a somewhat careful examination of their history, I can discover no avowal of such opinions ; nor practical demonstration of such principles. Barrowe and Greenwood were condemned "*for disturbance of the State,*" but, at the time of their death, they gave such evidence of their loyalty to their queen, praying so earnestly for her long and prosperous reign, that Elizabeth is said to have repented that she had suffered them to be executed.

It was an artifice of her bishops, in order to cover their own cruelty, to accuse these men of *disloyalty*. But history has lifted the veil, and shown the lawn of the bishops to be more deeply stained with the blood of these martyrs, than even the purple of the queen. It was, however, the policy of the Court to confound names and parties which were entirely distinct : viz., The advocates of *civil* liberty in the parliaments, and the advocates of *religious* liberty in the church. Such men as Peter Wentworth and attorney Morrice, in the House of Commons, were stigmatized as *Puritans*, and

Thus suffered the men who maintained most of the fundamental principles and important doctrines of modern Congregationalism.

They were men of deep-toned piety, of ardent zeal, of unflinching principle, and unconquerable courage. They were the most decided and uncompromising Puritans of their time. The more moderate, contrived to avoid the laws ; but, these men would hold no parley with unscriptural requisitions. They would not, even in *appearance*, countenance the errors of the English Hierarchy. They stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ himself had made them free. They appealed to the Word of God as the standard of their faith, as their rule of church government, and of religious practice. They aimed at primitive simplicity in their church polity : and in defence of this, they begged the privilege of confronting their adversaries ; and declared their readiness to show their own church order “ to be warranted by the Word of God, allowable by her Majesty’s laws, and, in no way prejudicial to her sovereign power :” \* \* \* to *disprove* the public hierarchy, worship, and government, by such evidences of Scripture as their adversaries should not be able to withstand ; protesting, that if they failed herein, they were not only willing to sustain

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classed with Cartwright and Barrowe. This was done, that the bad names of the latter (*bad* only among bad men) might embarrass the efforts of the former, to throw off from Parliament the incubus of Elizabeth’s tyranny, and to extract the poisonous fangs from the bishops’ jaws. The nation had become accustomed to the persecution and imprisonment of the Puritans, and would be likely to submit more patiently to the incarceration of Wentworth, and the degradation and imprisonment of Morrice, if called Puritans. The parties thus identified by the policy of the Court, and by their own sufferings, were naturally drawn together, and ultimately became one.



such deserved punishment as should be inflicted upon them, but to become conformable for the future." And all this they promised, "if we," say they, "overthrow not our adversaries,—we do not say if our adversaries overcome not us." This petition was addressed to the Privy Council. In other petitions, the sufferers begged to be tried by due process of law; or to have their principles examined by fair discussion; and "If," say they, "it should be objected that none of our party are worthy to be thus disputed with, we think we should prove the contrary; for, there are three or four of them in the city of London, and more elsewhere, who have been zealous preachers in the parish assemblies, and are not ignorant of the *Latin, Greek, and Hebrew tongues*, nor otherwise unlearned; and generally confessed to be of honest conversation." But all was in vain. "Chistianos ad leones!"—away with the Brownists! "Ad patibulum! ad patibulum!"—to the gallows, to the gallows with them! was the *ex-cathedra* command.\* The crowded prisons, the public executions, by the common hangmen, of men of learning and piety,—against whom no crime had

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\* It was the policy of the Roman priests, to persuade the common people, that all the ills which befel the nation were attributable to the anger of the gods against the impious Christians. They thus incited the populace, when any calamity befel the state, to demand that the Christians should be thrown to the wild beasts, which were kept for the purpose of devouring criminals. "*Chistianos ad leones!*" was the popular cry; and the judicial decision was its echo—*Chistianos ad leones!*

It is related that the infamous Duke of Alva—the notorious persecutor of the Protestants of the Netherlands—had in his council (called by the Flemings "THE COUNCIL OF BLOOD") one Hessels, who customarily slept during the trial of the prisoners arraigned for heresy; when aroused from his dreams, and his opinion demanded, his uniform reply was: "Ad patibulum, ad patibulum!"—to the gallows, to the gallows, with them!

been proved, and to whom scarcely the *apology* for a trial had been granted—but too plainly show the spirit of the times, and the temper of those in authority. At the same time they illustrate, most affectingly, the value which our religious ancestors attached to their principles of church order and discipline and worship, and suggest to their descendants their duty to maintain these principles at every hazard.

I have been thus particular in the history of the Brownists and Separatists, because they were men of primitive principles, and primitive courage; to whom the world is far more deeply indebted for the development and maintenance of the principles of civil and religious liberty than it seems disposed to acknowledge. And, as for Congregationalism, these were the men, who, at the hazard of their lives, dug the pure ore from the mine. As found in their hands, it was not free from impure admixtures, nor did it assume the attractive form into which more skilful hands afterwards wrought it: nevertheless, it was the precious ore of scriptural truth. The general principles embraced by Browne, and after him by the Separatists, were essentially the same which are now known in Great Britain and America as CONGREGATIONALISM.

The Confessions of doctrinal and ecclesiastical faith, which were published during this period (1586—1593) would be readily adopted, with very slight modifications, by every consistent and intelligent Congregational church now existing. That the reader may judge for himself upon this point, and as illustrative of the intense care with which our ecclesiastical ancestors searched the Scriptures to ascertain the truth, I have given, entire, in the Appendix, “A True Description, out of the Word of God, of the VISIBLE CHURCH;” published in the year 1589, and written, probably, by one

of the pastors of that very church from which the Congregational churches of New England are directly descended.\*

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE CONFORMING PURITANS AND SEPARATISTS.—THE BANISHMENT OF THE SEPARATISTS.

We have now arrived at a period in our church history of great importance ; the time when our ancestors began to flee to Holland. The interest which we feel in this period does not, however, arise so much from the events immediately connected with their banishment, as from the remote consequences of that banishment. But before we proceed to consider either, it may be well to review briefly the relative state of the contending parties in England.—The bishops supported by the Court, and the Puritans, including the conforming Puritans and the Separatists—supported by the Bible.

To understand fully the history of those times, it will be necessary to bear in mind, that, though the opposers of the English Hierarchal Establishment are known by the common appellation of PURITANS, yet there were, in fact, two divisions at least, among the Puritans themselves : namely, —The *conformable* Puritans ; or those who, though dissatisfied with the Church as established by law, yet remained nominally connected with it ; and the *Separatists*. The conformable Puritans were the men who, Neal tells us, “ made a shift to evade the form of the law, by coming to church when Common Prayer was almost over, and by re-

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\* See Appendix, No. 1.

ceiving the sacrament in some churches where it was administered with some latitude."

The Separatists, generally called Brownists by the writers of that day, and sometimes, Barrowists—were for an entire separation from the Church of England, as utterly unchristian in its organization. Now, between these two classes of Puritans, it is painful to say, that there was scarcely less friendship than between them and the court party. The conforming Puritans were in favor of an ecclesiastical establishment; "were no enemies to the name or function of a bishop," provided he did not assume *jure divino* authority over his presbyters, and would manage the affairs of his diocese in concurrence with them; neither did they object to "prescribed forms of prayer," provided some latitude was allowed the minister to vary, and sometimes to use his own conceptions or words; nor were they averse "to any decent and distinct habits for the clergy, that were not derived from Popery:"\*—in a word, they were for *altering* and *reforming*, but still for *retaining* the national church.

The Separatists, on the contrary, were for cutting up the whole ecclesiastical establishment, root and branch. They believed the Church of England to be none other than a daughter of the "Mother of Harlots;" who sanctioned many of the essential principles of Popery, and recognized most of its errors in government, discipline, and worship. They believed that there was no cure for the evils under which they groaned but in the entire destruction of the very system on which these evils were grafted; and to which they were, in a manner, indigenous. Such was their faith; and their practice, as we have seen, was in conformity with their belief: they were straight forward, uncompromising, *Christian* reformers.

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\* Neal, I. pp. 558—560.

Differing as these two parties did in their ecclesiastical principles, and in their conduct, it should not, perhaps, be a matter of surprise, that there was some conflict between them. The theory and practice of either party was, in fact, a tacit condemnation of the other. It would have been well had they gone no further. But truth compels us to confess, that it was far otherwise. The conforming Puritans regarded the Separatists as rash, heady, visionary, unreasonable men; and were not slow to tell them so. The Separatists, on the other hand, regarded the conforming Puritans as timid, trimming, time-serving men; whose principles and practice, so far as ecclesiastical matters were concerned, were anti-scriptural and unjustifiable; and they told them all this in plain, and sometimes *rough* English. Holding up the Bible, and pointing to the utter insufficiency of all the partial reformations which had taken place in the English Church, the Separatist proclaimed the utter hopelessness of any efficient and lasting reform, until the Word of God was adopted as the only infallible guide to the order, and discipline, and worship of the Christian church.

With these differing views the parties sought their desired objects by corresponding measures. The Separatists, while they proclaimed their attachment to the civil government of the kingdom, openly and earnestly sought the utter overthrow and annihilation of the entire ecclesiastical government of the realm. The Hierarchy—I mean the bishops and their coadjutors—found no difficulty in persuading the queen that the interests of the establishment and the crown were identical; and that, if these restless spirits were permitted to erect churches after their favorite model, in which the people should manage their own affairs, and choose their own officers, the next step would be, to claim the same prerogatives in civil matters: and then, farewell to the

crown and throne of England. Hence, the merciless alliance between the bishops and the court, to crush and utterly to extirpate the Separatists.

The conforming Puritans, in compliance with their adopted principles, pursued a different course to obtain their desired ends. They sought *reformation*, not a new order of things; they therefore applied with petitions, and supplications, and propositions to her Majesty, to his Grace the archbishop—who was the master spirit of the whole Establishment—to the Convocation of the clergy, and to the Parliament. The Commons would gladly have relieved the Puritans; and actually set about the work. But the archbishop interposed, and stirred up the queen to stop the mouths and measures of the Commons: all the petitions and supplications of the Puritans were utterly unavailing. The court and the bishops either regarded these petitions, etc. as entering wedges to other innovations, and therefore to be rejected; or, perhaps, flattered themselves that the mass of the petitioners might be retained in the church, from which they were so unwilling to separate, without any concessions or alterations. At all events, so far as any mitigation of their hardships was concerned, the Puritans might as well have addressed the four winds of heaven, as the Queen, Parliament, Convocation, and Archbishop of England. Nevertheless, the more moderate and timid of the petitioners still kept within the verge of the church, and made a compromise with their consciences, so far as to escape the edge of the law. Others, however, and these not a few—were driven into open separation. Multitudes, in different parts of the kingdom, were gradually brought into the sentiments of the Separatists, and resolved to have no further fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. They consequently withdrew themselves entirely from the

parish churches, and assembled in private houses, in the woods, or wherever they could hear the gospel preached without the accompaniments of the Common Prayer, and the Popish rites, ceremonies, and dresses.

*The Exile Act.*

To check the progress of the Separatists—or *Brownists* as they were usually called by their enemies—the parliament of 1592—3, framed what Neal calls, “one of the severest acts of oppression and cruelty that ever was passed by the representatives of a Protestant nation, and a free people.” It was entitled, “*An Act for the punishment of persons obstinately refusing to come to church, and persuading others to impugn the Queen’s authority in ecclesiastical causes.*”

By this act, any person above the age of sixteen, who should neglect to repair to some church, chapel, or usual place of common prayer, for the space of one month, “without lawful cause,” was to be committed to prison without bail: and should he refuse to conform after three month’s imprisonment, he was required to “*abjure the realm, and go into perpetual banishment;*” and, if he refused to do this, or returned after banishment, he was doomed to “*Suffer death without benefit of clergy.*” And the same punishment was denounced upon all such, as, by “printing, writing, or express words,” should impugn the queen’s ecclesiastical supremacy, or should attempt to persuade others to neglect the law-established worship of the kingdom; or should be present at any “unlawful assembly, conventicle, or meeting, under color or pretence of any exercise of religion.”\*

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\* See Neal, Vol. I. pp. 513—515; Hume, Vol. III. Chap. 43, pp. 188—191.

It was while this act was under discussion, that the celebrated Sir Walter Raleigh, and a Mr. Finch uttered the following sentiments, which deserve our attention as illustrating the progress of Congregationalism up to 1592—3; and the hatred of the ruling powers towards such as embraced these principles of church order.

Sir Walter said: "In my conceit the Brownists are worthy to be rooted out of the commonwealth; but what danger may grow to *ourselves* if this law pass, it were fit to be considered. For it is to be feared, that men *not guilty* will be included in it. And this law is hard that taketh life, and sendeth into banishment, where men's *intentions* shall be judged by a jury, and they shall be judges what another *means*. But that law that is against a *fact* is but just; and punish the fact as severely as you will. If two or three thousand Brownists meet at the sea, at whose charge shall they be transported, or whither will you send them? *I am sorry for it, I am afraid there are near twenty thousand of them in England, and when they be gone, who shall maintain their wives and children?*" Mr. Finch said, "There be great faults in the preamble and in the body of this Bill. It pretendeth a punishment only to Brownists and Sectarians; but throughout the whole Bill, not one thing that concerneth a Brownist; and if we make a law against Barrowists, and Brownists, let us set down a note of them, who they are. But this Bill is, 'not to come to Church,' or to 'speak against the government established,' this is not the opinion of the Brownists." \*

The bill, nevertheless, passed. And, though intended for far other purposes, it was overruled by God to the promotion of his glory in the establishment of those very princi-

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\* Hanbury, p. 34; Neal Vol. I. p. 516.



ples which the queen and her clergy were endeavoring to overthrow, and utterly to root out. It seems to have been the purpose of God to make use of this cruel law, to remove from England many of the purest-minded and best of his people, that in the land of their exile they might mature and perfect that system of church government which in due time was to be restored, and flourish on the soil of Britain ; and to be transplanted to a distant land to bless the teeming millions of a new world.

*The Separatists retire to Holland, 1592—4.*

When this bill passed, the prisons about London were filled with the Separatists, as has been narrated in the preceding chapter ; and it is probable that the gaols all over the kingdom were in a similar condition. But the prison doors were soon thrown open, and the chains of the prisoners for ecclesiastical offences—i. e. for not worshipping God according to law—were stricken off, on condition that the liberated would abjure the realm, and go into perpetual banishment. Though these men would sooner have died than have conformed to the church of England,\* yet were they glad to accept a release from their rigorous and long continued imprisonment, even on such hard terms as perpetual banishment.

The Dutch states, had long been the resort of the persecuted Protestants of England ; and thither the emancipated Separatists directed their steps. We are not furnished with the particulars of the removal of the first exiles. We only know, that both ministers and people went together ; and, there is too much evidence, that they went in deep

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\* Barrowe and Greenwood were offered pardons on condition that they would conform ; but chose death as the least of the two evils.

poverty. The members of the London church, were probably, among the first to turn their backs upon their native land. Johnson, their devoted pastor, soon followed them.

FRANCIS JOHNSON was a well educated and pious man. He was "Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge;" where he began to suffer for his Puritanism, as early as 1588—9. Having publicly avowed his belief that every scriptural church should have teaching and ruling elders, he was expelled the University, and committed to close prison without bail; and thus probably remained for about a year. In 1592—3 we hear of him, in connection with the first church of the Separation. And soon after, we find him a fellow-prisoner with Greenwood; "both of whom, between one and two of the clock, after midnight \* \* with bills and staves" were "led to the Counter [prison] in Wood street." Here, he probably remained until the exile act gave him the *privilege* of abjuring his native land, rather than violate his conscience. We next hear of him associated with that eminently learned and celebrated man, Henry Ainsworth, "the able commentator on the Scriptures," "in close alliance" with the church of English Separatists, in "a blind lane at Amsterdam." Johnson was the pastor, and Ainsworth the teacher, or doctor of these conscientious exiles.\*

Arrived in Holland, these advocates of a scriptural church polity were indeed no longer subjected to fines and imprisonment, dungeons, irons, and death by the hangman; but still, they were destined to suffer a sort of persecution

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\* This distinction between the teaching officers of the church, founded on the words of the apostle, Eph. 4: 11, was early made, and long continued by the fathers of English and American Congregationalism. Both officers were preachers; but the pastor's appropriate themes were *practical duties*; while the teacher's were *doctrinal*.

scarcely less difficult to bear. The Dutch government, acting upon their long established and politic principles of religious toleration, received the exiles with a measure of kindness ; and allowed them to erect churches in the principal cities of the states. But the ecclesiastical powers were less friendly. They looked with an evil eye upon these conscientious refugees. Their system of church government was, doubtless, too liberal and democratic in its character for the ecclesiastics of Holland even. By these, the strangers were at first treated with little kindness. The learned and excellent Ainsworth complained, that his brethren and himself “ were loaded with reproaches, despised, and afflicted by all ; and almost consumed with deep poverty.”\* And, as an illustration of this, we are told that Ainsworth himself, one of the most profound scholars of his day, was at one time obliged to subsist on “ *nine pence a week, and some boiled roots.*” And for this pittance, even, he seems to have been reduced to the necessity of hiring himself as a porter to a bookseller. And yet, this man was capable of writing a commentary on the Pentateuch, which all the improvements of modern scholarship have scarcely superseded.

The explanation of all this, is found in the fact, that the Separatists had been slandered, persecuted, imprisoned, starved, and hanged in England, as enemies to the *civil* as well as ecclesiastical government of the kingdom. And, not content with persecuting them out of the country, their enemies had followed them with their slanders into Holland ; representing them as a discontented, factious, fanatical people, alike dangerous to state and church.

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\* Preface to his Treatises, quoted by Toumlin, in Neal's Pur. Vol. II. p. 69.

In addition to this; the dissensions of Browne's church at Middleburgh, some years previous,—with whom the exiles were everywhere confounded,—greatly added to the prejudices imported from England.

To counteract these slanderous reports, and to justify their claim to the confidence of the Hollanders, the church at Amsterdam published in 1598,\* “the Confession of Faith of certain English people, living in the Low Countries, exiled.” In this work they explain the state of things in the church of England, which had forced them into a Separation; avouch their allegiance to the civil authority; and define their doctrine and discipline. In this Confession, drawn up probably by Ainsworth and Johnson, the same general principles of church order and discipline are professed as those contained in Clyfton's Confession, already noticed, and inserted in the Appendix. The same, for substance, which every Congregational church now embraces. Every article is supported by a host of Scripture references.†

To add to their sufferings, dissensions at length arose in the church itself; the first occasion of which seems to have been a trifling one—the marriage of their pastor, with a wealthy and somewhat fashionable widow; but, it verified the observation of the apostle, “How great a matter a little fire kindleth.” It resulted in slander and abuse, and excommunications; which came nigh tearing the very church in pieces: to the extravagant joy of their adversaries, and the great grief of such as loved the cause of truth. The remark of John Robinson on the occasion,—himself

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\* This seems to have been republished in 1602.

† Four of these articles, taken at random, containing about forty lines of matter, are supported by about twenty lines of references, in figures.

not personally concerned in the quarrel—deserves to be repeated : “ It is to us,” said this good man, “ just cause of humiliation all the days of our lives, that we have given and do give, by our differences, such advantages to them which seek occasion against us to blaspheme the Truth ; though this may be a just judgment of God upon others which seek offences, that seeking they may find them to the hardening of their hearts in evil. But let men turn their eyes which way sceever they will, they shall see the same scandals. Look to the first and best churches planted by the apostles themselves, and behold dissensions, scandal, strife, biting one of another.”\*

The retort of Ainsworth, upon such as made merchandize of the sins of this people, is characteristic of the man : “ How pregnant your persuasions are, to make us believe that because there are sins in Sion, there be none in Babylon !”†

Differences afterwards arose upon the subject of church power, which were of a more serious character. An explanation of this controversy will come more appropriately in a succeeding chapter.

It must be satisfactory to every good man to know, that after a few years, their dissensions were all hushed, and peace and harmony restored ; and that this oldest of the churches of the Separation lived and flourished in the land to which it had been transplanted, for more than one hundred years.

Another source of suffering to this poor church, was opened by the slanders and falsehoods of false brethren, brought in unawares ; who apostatized, and made their peace with the English prelates by maligning their former

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\* Robinson's Justification of Separation, p. 55, in Hanbury, p. 99.

† Counterpoison, p. 51, quoted as above.

friends.\* To one of this sort, Thomas White, the indefatigable Francis Johnson replied : “ Let himself remember his own saying heretofore, if he will regard no others, ‘ That a man that hath run away from his master, will seldom give him a good report.’ ”

And, as if all these things were not enough, some of the Dutch divines were not unwilling to lay new burdens upon the poor exiles. Francis Junius, divinity reader at Leyden, entered the lists against them : but certainly had no occasion to be proud of his encounter with the despised Separatists.†

Another enemy with whom this church were obliged to contend, on their first going to Amsterdam, was the celebrated Arminius, then pastor of a church in that city.

The reader need not be told that these various opponents must have furnished abundant employment for the ready writers of the Separation. Indeed, their life in Holland was an almost incessant conflict with opponents. They had the prejudices of the Dutch to soften ; which they attempted by publishing their confessions, etc. ; which must have cost them a great deal of labor. They had the Libels of such men as the apostate White, and Lawne, and Fairlambe, to answer ; which, though not a difficult, was yet a

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\* It is a valuable, though an undesigned testimony, which one of these apostates, Christopher Lawne, gives to the general steadfastness of the Separatists, when he says : “ I am not without hope \* \* \* that some shall thereby [i. e. by reading his description of the Brownists] be stayed from undertaking that hard and dangerous voyage of ‘ Separation,’ from which so FEW HAVE EVER RETURNED TO COMMUNION WITH THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST”—i. e. to the same Popish congregations of the English Church.—Hanbury, p. 100.

† See a particular account of the controversy between Junius and the church at Amsterdam, in Hanbury’s 8th Chapter.

vexatious task. The Puritans set on *their* champions ; as Jacob, and the supercilious and self-important Broughton ; and their writings required labored replies.

The prelates, through their caustic and “pragmatical” advocate, Hall, attacked them ; and furnished work for their ablest writers ; and Smyth, one of their former ministers, becoming an Arminian-Baptist, drew them into that controversy. These several opponents, and occasions for controversy—not to name others—made the lives of the Separatists but little less tolerable in Holland than they had been in the prisons of England. Nevertheless, they stood erect ; and contended manfully for what they believed to be the truth as it is in Christ. And he who reads with care their various controversial treatises, will not fail to learn, that the leaders of the Separation, the fathers of English Congregationalism, were men of deep learning, great acuteness, and profound acquaintance with the Word of God, in its original, as well as in its English dress. They wrote like men who understood what they said, and whereof they affirmed. They were men who could “render a reason” for their faith and practice, and were to be *feared* rather than despised by an opponent. And he who has been accustomed to look upon the fathers of our denomination as well meaning, but weak fanatics, will find to his surprise, on examination, that their various writings abound with the marks of strong intellects, and of mature scholarship ; and that, on many subjects, they have left but little to be said by their modern followers. Some of these men will be found handling the Greek, the Hebrew, and Syriac with perfect freedom ; and nothing will strike the reader more forcibly, than the almost *perfect* acquaintance which they all manifest with every part of the Bible ; and the frequency and aptness of their Scriptural quotations.

Such were the men who were deemed unfit to live in England ; and, being driven out from their native land, laid the foundations of Congregational churches in different cities of Holland.

I have, as yet, spoken of but one church of English Separatists in Holland ; namely, the church at Amsterdam : this was the church which was organized in Nicholas Lane, London ; and is frequently called in this work—the London church. This church seem to have removed, in 1593, nearly *en masse* to Amsterdam ; and so far as we know, was the first established in Holland. But besides this, there were quickly planted churches of like character, composed of English exiles, in the cities of Arkheim, Middleburgh, Rotterdam, and Leyden. The date of these several organizations, or any interesting particulars of their history, with one exception, I cannot, in this volume, give. To the history of this exception—I refer to the church of Leyden—we shall presently recur, after having disposed of some preliminary matters needful to a full appreciation of our subsequent history.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

DECLINE AND DEATH OF ELIZABETH—ACCESSION OF JAMES I,  
1603 — SEPARATIST'S PETITION—HAMPTON COURT CON-  
FERENCE.

Contemporary with the transactions recorded in the preceding chapter, there were important changes going forward in England. As the age and infirmities of Elizabeth warned men of her approaching dissolution, the court paid



to her, and the respect shown her, began sensibly to diminish, much to her grief and mortification. Through her whole reign she had endeavored to guard against this, by refusing to name her successor to the throne. But all her precautions could not prevent her courtiers and subjects from turning their thoughts from the fading Queen to the presumptive heir to the English throne.

One effect of this state of things, in which every good man must rejoice, was, to abate the violence of the English prelates towards their Puritan brethren. Their ecclesiastical lordships were not without fearful misgivings when they turned their eyes towards Presbyterian Scotland; from whence their new king would doubtless come. Like prudent men, they foresaw the evil and began to hide themselves. And one of their precautionary measures was, to abate their persecuting zeal against the Puritans. It was the archbishop's injunctions, requiring subscription to *all* the articles of the Establishment, rather than the act of Parliament, which required subscription to "the true christian faith and the doctrine of the sacraments" only—which distressed the Puritans; and it was therefore entirely within the power of the archbishop and his prelates to allay persecution, by ceasing to enforce subscription and obedience to their archepiscopal injunctions.

While affairs were in this posture, queen Elizabeth fell into a morbid melancholy, which no efforts could remove. For ten days she lay upon the floor, supported by cushions, refusing medicine, and taking but little sustenance; and, at length expired, March 24th, 1603, in the 70th year of her age, and the 45th of her eventful reign.

James VI, king of Scotland, was named by Elizabeth as her successor; or at least, the queen's ministers and attend-

ants chose to think so.\* He was accordingly proclaimed forthwith, king of Great Britain, under the title of James I. *James* was the son of the unfortunate, if not criminal Mary, Queen of Scots ; and had an undoubted right to the English crown—as her heir and successor. He was the first of the line of Stuarts who sat upon the throne of Great Britain. It would have been well for England had he been the last.

All parties in the nation had hopes and fears in view of the new reign. The king's mother had lived and died a Papist, and was counted as a martyr to that faith ; and James himself had been baptized into the same faith, and had been pleased to call the Church of Rome his “ mother church.” These were grounds of hope to the Popish party. But James had been educated among the Presbyterians ; and had openly, and repeatedly professed his attachment to the Church of Scotland ; declaring it to be “ *the sincerest [purest] kirk in the world ;*” and twice had he “ *sworn and subscribed*” the Presbyterian confession of faith ; and had publicly “ praised God that he was born to be king of such a church ;” declaring at the same time, that “ the service of the Church of England was an evil said mass in English.† These circumstances filled the Puritans with high hopes. The Episcopalians relied chiefly on their easy access to the monarch, and their fulsome flatteries. They counted much, too, on their ability to per-

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\* See Russell's *Modern Europe*, Let. 72, Vol. I.—particularly the last note, where we are told, that Elizabeth was speechless when the question respecting her successor was put ; and that she only made *signs*, on which her attendants put their own interpretation. Hume says nothing of this circumstance.

† Calderwood, in *Prince*, p. 105 ; Crookshank's *His. Church of Scotland*, Introduction.

suade the vain and tyrannical king that the established religion of the kingdom was the mainstay of the throne ; that no bishop, no king, were convertible terms ; and this, to the delight of their souls, they found an easy task.\* The poor Separatists had least to expect, and were, therefore, least disappointed by this man, whom Burnet calls "*the scorn of the age* ;" and whom another has characterized as "*the prelates jackal*."†

James started on his ill-omened journey to London, April 5th, 1603. On his way he was presented with a petition signed by 746 Puritan ministers, praying for "the reformation of certain ceremonies and abuses of the church :"<sup>‡</sup> this was the far-famed "*millenary petition*."<sup>‡</sup>

### *The Separatists Petition.*

Soon after the king arrived in England, such of the Separatists as still remained in the kingdom, or had returned from exile on the death of Elizabeth, addressed him in a respectful and loyal manner ; not asking for a legal estab-

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\* Archbishop Whitgift is said to have manifested considerable anxiety about the approach of the "Scotch Mist," as he termed the Stuart dynasty. But immediately on the death of the queen, his grace despatched a messenger post haste to Scotland, in the name of all the bishops and clergy of the Establishment, "to recommend the Church of England to the king's countenance and favor."—Neal, II. p. 30.

† Hanbury.

‡ I follow Prince, N. E. Chro. p. 103. The petition itself, in its preamble, says it was subscribed "*to the number of more than a thousand*."—Fuller, in Hanbury, p. 117. Neal says: "*Not more than eight hundred out of twenty-five counties*."—Vol. II. p. 31. Hume says: "*Not less than seven hundred and fifty clergymen signed a petition to the king, \* \* \* many now seemed willing to adhere to it*."—Vol. III. p. 276. Chap. 45.

lishment ; not suing even for a reform of manifold abuses in the existing Establishment ; but simply praying, that they might be suffered “ in peace to walk in the faith of the Gospel.” This petition was accompanied by their confession of faith, etc.

This address to royalty not proving effectual, they soon after presented another ; in which, after distinctly pointing out the particulars in which they differed from the Hierarchy, they respectfully say : “ Our humble suit therefore is, That the ancient and only true way of Christ being revived, we, his unworthy witnesses thereof, your Majesty’s loyal subjects, may, by your sovereign authority, be protected so as we may be suffered peaceably to walk in that faith,” etc.

Yet another address to the throne was thought necessary,—it may be it was *required* ; for the petitioners say : “ We being come *to attend your majesty’s pleasure*,” etc. In this document the petitioners defend and illustrate, with great labor and ability, their former positions. This petition, or address, occupying nearly forty quarto pages, was afterwards,—at the request of “ an honorable person,”—condensed into three distinct propositions, which embraced the burden of the Separatists’ prayer to his majesty. The substance of which was, that the petitioners might enjoy toleration and protection in their native land ; and, at least, be allowed a fair opportunity to explain and defend their principles before they were condemned, and themselves banished.\*

We have no evidence that James thought that “ *kingcraft*” required any attention to be paid to these repeated solicitations of the poor Separatists. If these petitions ever reached the royal eye, they certainly never touched the heart of his kingship.

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\* See Hanbury, Chap. VI.

*Hampton Court Conference.*

To the millenary petition, the king thought it advisable to *pretend* some regard. He, therefore, appointed "a Conference," to be held at Hampton Court, between the Bishops and the Puritans. The disputants, on both sides, were designated by the king ; who showed his *impartiality*, and his desire for a fair discussion of the points at issue, by nominating "*nine* bishops, and about as many dignitaries," to defend the Hierarchy ; and *four* Puritan divines to defend the petitioners. The Conference, or rather *the farce*, was not public ; but was carried on in "the drawing room within the privy chamber, at Hampton Court."\* It began on Saturday, January 14th, 1604, with a private interview between the king and his bishops and counsellors ; in which the preliminaries of the intended attack upon the Puritans were arranged. On Monday, his Majesty, surrounded by his privy counsellors and nobles, began to exhibit his "kingcraft" by brow-beating and abusing the Puritan advocates ; being himself the chief actor in the play.

The third day of the "farcical Conference," began with another private interview between the king and his nobility and the bishops, the Puritans being excluded. In this interview the king defended and praised the High-Commission

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\* Hampton Court is the name of a palace built by Cardinal Wolsey, in Hampton, about twelve miles from London, on the river Thames. Its buildings, gardens, and parks, are said to occupy an area of about four miles. The Cardinal furnished it sumptuously ; and, among other articles, with 280 silk beds for the accommodation of strangers. It has long been a royal palace. The reader will find a minute, and somewhat interesting account of Hampton and its Court—accompanied by beautiful views of the palace, etc.—in Trotter's "Views in the Environs of London,"

Court, and the subscription to all the Archbishop's Articles and to the Common Prayer Book, and the infamous *ex officio* oath; saying, "if any, after things are well ordered, will not be quiet and show his obedience, the church were better without him, and he *were worthy to be hanged*." It was under the delirium of joy produced by this most Christian and kingly speech, that Archbishop Whitgift, "with a sugared bait, (which princes are apt enough to swallow,)" exclaimed: "Undoubtedly your majesty speaks by the special assistance of God's spirit!"\* and Dr. Bancroft, on his knees protested: "My heart melteth for joy, that Almighty God, of his singular mercy, has given us such a king, as since Christ's time hath not been!" Such were the fulsome flatteries of these clerical dignitaries; these were the silken cords by which they bound the king to the Hierarchy.

After this private acting had been carried on for a while, the Puritan divines were called in to receive an additional portion of contemptuous abuse from the lips of this "Solomon of the age." They were then dismissed with the following *gentle* words: "*If this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will hurrie them out of the kingdom, or else do worse: ONLY HANG THEM, THAT'S ALL.*"† Thus ended the Hampton Court Conference. It was designed to answer very much the same purpose as was the pretended disputation, in the days of Queen Mary, between the Oxford doctors, and Archbishop Cranmer and

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\* See Wilson's Life and Reign of James I. p. 665. — Howell, who, I believe, was an eye and ear witness of the Conference, says in reference to this speech of Whitgift: "I wist not what they mean; but *the spirit was rather foul-mouthed*."—Lingard, His. Eng. Vol. IX. p. 26. note.

† See Neal, II. Chap. 1. pp. 35—46; Prince, pp. 102—107; Hanbury, Chaps. 6 and 7.

poor old Latimer,—so sick that he could scarcely hold up his head. Of the two, the Oxford Conference was the fairer. “In the accounts that we read of this meeting we are alternately struck with wonder at the indecent and partial behaviour of the king, and the abject baseness of the bishops, mixed, according to the custom of such natures, with insolence towards their opponents.”\*

The Hampton Court Conference, as it was called, allowed the king and his bishops to say, that the Puritans had been heard in defence of their claims, and had been vanquished in argument.† And, though the four advocates were not the chosen representatives of the Puritan party, and complained loudly that they were very unfairly used in the Conference,‡ still the whole body were counted as a vanquished

\* Hallam, *Const. His. of Eng.* Vol. I. p. 404.

† The modest king, in giving an account of this Conference, boasted—“That he had soundly peppered off the Puritans;” and that they had so fled him in argument, as would have been disgraceful in school-boys even. Dr. John Reynolds was one of these “peppered Puritans;” styled by Calamy, “the wonder of the age for learning;” and by Hallam, “nearly, if not altogether, the most learned man in England.”

‡ Hume shrewdly remarks: “The Puritans were here so unreasonable, as to complain of a partial and unfair management of the dispute; as if the search after truth were, in any degree, the object of such conferences.” \* \* — Vol. III. p. 278. Wilson, describing this Conference, says, that “They [the Puritan divines] disputed against the cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, the surplice, the oath *ex officio*, and other things that stuck with them; which they had hoped to get all purged away, because the king was of a northern constitution, where no such things were practised; not yet having felt the king’s pulse, whom the southern air of the bishops’ breaths had so wrought upon, that he himself answers most of their demands; sometimes gently, applying lenitives, when he found ingenuity, (for he was learned and eloquent,) [at] other times corrosives, telling them, these oppositions pro-

enemy ; and were doomed to corresponding treatment. And what was still worse, the poor Separatists, who were not considered of sufficient importance to be allowed an advocate in this august Conference, or even to be spectators of its proceedings, were destined to share fully in all the evils with which the non-conformists were to be visited ; and by which they were to be “hurried out of the kingdom.”

This conference was the prelude to a royal proclamation, issued March 5, 1604, declaring that “the same religion, with Common Prayer, and Episcopal jurisdiction, shall fully and only be publicly exercised, in all respects, as in the reign of queen Elizabeth, *without hope of toleration of any other.*”\*

On the 20th of the same month, the Convocation of the clergy, under the presidency of the violent Bancroft—Whitgift having died on the 29th of February—met, and drew up a book of 141 Canons ; which, with the king’s proclamation, completed the machinery for *hurrying* the Puritans out of the kingdom. The canons were confirmed by letters patent from the king, and became the law of the realm June 25th, 1604.

These canons denounced excommunication “*ipso facto*”—for the very act—after this sort : “Whosoever shall affirm, that the Church of England by law established, is not a true and *apostolical* church, let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored only by the archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of his wicked error.”—The same punishment was denounced on whomsoever should affirm—“that the form of God’s worship contained

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ceeded more from stubbornness in opinion, than tenderness of conscience : and so, betwixt his arguments and kingly authority, menaced them to a conformity, which proved a way of silencing them for the present ; and some of them were content to acquiesce for the future.”—Life of James I. p. 665.

\* Howes, in Prince ; Neal, II. p. 47.



in the Book of Common Prayer \* \* \* containeth any thing in it that is repugnant to the Scriptures :”—“ that any of the thirty-nine articles of the church \* \* are in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe to :”—that the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England are wicked, anti-christian, superstitious, or such as, being commanded by lawful authority, good men may not with a good conscience approve, use, or, as occasion requires, subscribe :” that “ shall affirm the government of the Church of England, by archbishops, bishops, deans, and archdeacons, and the rest that bear office in the same, is anti-christian, or repugnant to the Word of God :” “ that the form or manner of making and consecrating bishops, priests, or deacons, contains any thing repugnant to the Word of God” \* \* :—or, “ shall separate from the communion of the Church of England \* \* or combine together in a new brotherhood” \* \* :—or “ shall affirm that there are within this realm, other meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the king’s born subjects, than such as are established by law, that may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful churches.” \* \* — For each of these several offences, excommunication, with all its civil and ecclesiastical terrors, was pronounced ; and the offender was not to be restored “ but only by the archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of his wicked error.” \*

Such were some of the canons which were forged by this Convocation ; and ratified, confirmed, and enforced, by the tyrannical rulers of church and state during this entire reign. These were the laws by which multitudes of pious men—ministers and laymen—were fined and imprisoned in their native land, and driven out of the kingdom to die in foreign climes.

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\* Neal, II. pp. 53—62 ; Hanbury, pp. 120—123.

To these infamous canons all the “king’s born subjects” were required to conform. His majesty issued his proclamation July 6th, 1604, ordering “the Puritan ministers either to conform before the last of November, or to dispose of themselves and families some other way; as being men unfit, for their obstinacy and contempt, to occupy such places.”\*

The weight of this proclamation and of these canons fell alike on the Separatists and the Puritans.—Of the latter, the number who were ejected, silenced, or suspended, in the course of the ensuing year, up to Nov. 5th, 1605, is estimated at from 270 to 400.

Bancroft, who was now advanced to the archepiscopal chair vacated by Whitgift’s death, was a fit instrument to carry on this work of persecution. Few worse men ever occupied Lambeth palace than John Whitgift: but Richard Bancroft was one of *those few*. He was a sycophant to his majesty; but a harsh, and violent, and unrelenting persecutor of all Nonconformists. “A person,” says Wilson, a contemporary historian,—“*severe enough*; whose roughness gained little upon those that deserted the ceremonies.”†

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### JOHN ROBINSON AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

It was during the reign of the besotted, tyrannical, hypocritical, and contemptible James I;‡ and this fit associate in

\* Prince, under the date.

† History of the Life and Reign of James I. Fol. p. 685.

‡ I use strong language; but milder epithets would belie historic truth. Hallam says: “James was all his life rather a *bold liar* than a good dissembler.”—Const. His. p. 404, note. “The French

the government of the church of England, archbishop Bancroft,—that John Robinson and a Separatist church in the North of England are first brought before us. As this great and good man and the church of which he became pastor were instrumental in introducing some modifications of the doctrines and practice of our denomination, which are still retained among us ; and as it is in fact from this source, as the fountain head—or rather *reservoir*—that Congregationalism, or Independency, has flowed forth in its present purity to Great Britain and America—it would be inexcusable in one attempting a history of this denomination, not to detail the history of this excellent man and his associates.

JOHN ROBINSON was born in the year 1575. The place of his nativity, his parentage, and his early history are unknown. He was educated at Cambridge University. That he was *well* educated no one will doubt who reads any of his writings. His mind, if not of the very highest order, was of the very *best* order. It was clear and discriminating ; well disciplined, and admirably balanced. He seems to have possessed the rare ability, to contemplate and investigate an absorbing subject, without losing sight of other matters of interest and importance. His moral qualities were of the most interesting and lovely character. He was a man of great prudence, and modesty, and humility ; courteous and kind in his feelings and conduct ; and possessed of deep and ardent piety. His search after truth seems to have been most careful and thorough. He was open to conviction and anxious to receive truth from any quarter,

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Ambassadors Sully and La Boderic, thought most contemptibly of the King. His own courtiers, as their private letters show, disliked and derided him.”—Lingard, and Hallam, p. 406, note. Burnet calls him “ *contemptible*.”

and ready to modify or abandon his own opinions when convinced that they were erroneous.

With such personal, intellectual, and moral qualities, we need not be surprised that John Robinson was highly esteemed by good men ; and was capable of exerting a powerful influence over the minds and hearts of all who knew him and rightly estimated him.

His first settlement as a minister of the gospel seems to have been at Norwich, the capital of Norfolk county ;\* where he held a benefice in the church of England. This was some time prior to 1602 ; and if so, Mr. Robinson could not have been, at that time, more than twenty-seven years of age. He appears at first to have been a conforming Puritan. But being harassed by the bishops, and “ urged with subscription ” to all the rites and ceremonies of the church ;† this good man was led into a more careful investigation of the principles of church polity ; and was thus gradually drawn further from conformity to the hierarchy. This change of sentiments procured his suspension ; and finally, caused him to be silenced. After this, probably, he applied for the chaplaincy of the hospital at Norwich ; but, though “ a man worthily revered of all the city, for the graces of God in him, he was refused.”‡ Nevertheless, many seriously disposed persons resorted to his house for counsel respecting their “ particular soul sickness,” and for prayer. This irritated the bishop ; and “ certain citizens were excommunicated ” for these offences against the law-

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\* Belknap, (*Am. Biog.*) and after him Allen, (*Biog. Dic.*) say : “ Near Yarmouth ; ” but Ainsworth and Hall, as found in Hanbury, speak as if in Norwich was Mr. Robinson’s benefice,—pp. 185, and 198, note *e* ; and so does Robinson himself. One of his works is addressed to his “ Christian friends at Norwich.”

† See back p. 303.

‡ Ainsworth.

established church. Mr. Robinson, finding that he could not remain at peace in Norwich, retired to some part of the neighboring county of Lincoln. As yet, however, he seems not to have separated entirely from the church of England.

It was about this time (1602) that we are first introduced to those worthy men who became the fellow-pilgrims of Mr. Robinson in a strange land. Governor Bradford, in his history of Plymouth, thus introduces them: "Near the joining borders of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, several religious people, finding their pious ministers urged with subscription, or silenced, and the people greatly vexed with the commissary courts [i. e. courts held in the name, and by the authority of the bishops, in their respective dioceses, by judges called Commissaries] Apparitors, and Pursuivants, [the sheriffs and constables of these courts,] which they had borne sundry years with much patience," \* \*—were, at length, brought to "see further into these things by the light of the Word of God; how that, not only the ceremonies were unlawful, but also, the lordly and tyrannous power of the prelates; who would, contrary to the freedom of the gospel, load the consciences of men, and by their compulsive power make a profane mixture of things and persons in divine worship; that their offices, courts, and canons, were unlawful; being such as have no warrant in the Word of God, but the same that were used in Popery, and still retained. Upon which this people shake off this yoke of antichristian bondage; and, as the Lord's free people, join themselves by covenant into a church state, to walk in all her ways, made known, or to be made known to them, according to their best endeavors, whatever it cost them."\*

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\* Governor Bradford's History, in Prince, Part I. pp. 99, 100. The pious and excellent Governor was one of these persons; and

It was among this people that Mr. Robinson's lot was at length cast. They were organized into a church about 1602; the year previous to Elizabeth's death; when the hierarchal persecution—for reasons already assigned—was somewhat relaxed. Whether this organization took place before, or after Mr. Robinson came among them, does not fully appear. From the institution of the church until 1606, we hear nothing of these good people. It is most likely, that, for a year or two, they were not much molested by the bishops; for the prelates were in great fear lest the tables should be turned upon them, and they should be made to drink of the bitter cup which they had so long been forcing upon others.\*

When their fears were fully allayed by the Hampton Court Conference, the ratification of the severe articles of the Convocation of March, 1604, and the king's proclamation, enjoining entire conformity to these articles, and, above all, by elevation to the archepiscopal throne of the rough-tempered, and severe persecutor Bancroft, in December—when, I say, by these means the fears of the bishops were entirely allayed, and their persecuting zeal set with a sharp edge, then the poor Separatists on the borders of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, were made to feel the full vengeance of these pretended “successors of the apostles.” In the mean time, this little company of Separatists had so increased, as to become “two bands;” it being deemed necessary for the better accom-

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therefore an original, and most authentic witness of all that he relates.

\* Cambden, tells us: “Whilst the king began to find fault with some things used in the Liturgy, and thought it convenient that they should be altered, John Whitgift, the archbishop, *died for grief.*”—Annals of James I, Feb. 29th, 1604.

modation of the widely scattered believers, to organize a second church of the Separation.

In one of these churches, "besides several of note, is Mr. John Smith [or Smyth] a man of able gifts, and a good preacher, who is chosen their pastor. \* \* In the other church, besides several worthy men, is Mr. Richard Clifton [Clyfton], a grave and reverend preacher; and the Rev. John Robinson, who is afterwards their pastor for many years, till God takes him away by death; as also Mr. William Brewster, a reverend man, who afterwards is chosen Elder, and lives with them till old age."\*

After the settlement of the new government—civil and ecclesiastical—these two churches were greatly harassed by the bishops. The brethren sought to cover themselves by secretly meeting in private houses, and by moving from place to place; still, fines and imprisonment were imposed upon them with an unsparing hand.

At length, despairing of any peace in their native land, they began to emigrate to Holland. Mr. Smyth and his friends went over first, in the year 1606, and settled at Amsterdam, where the London church, under Messrs. Johnson and Ainsworth, had been for several years in exile.

In the fall of 1607, Governor Bradford tells us: that "Messrs. Clifton and Robinson's church being extremely harassed, some cast into prison, some beset in their houses, some forced to leave their farms and families, they begin to fly over to Holland, with their reverend pastor, Mr. Clifton."

It seems to have been, however, with great difficulty that they escaped from England. "A large company of them

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\* Bradford, in Prince, p. 114. I use the new edition of 1826,—Cumming's, Hilliard and Co. Boston.

had hired a ship wholly to themselves," at Boston, (Eng.) to carry them to Holland. The captain promised to be ready at a time and place agreed upon, but disappointed them : he afterwards took them on board in the night, only to betray them to their enemies ; who stripped them of their property, treated their females with indecency, carried them through the streets of Boston, to be a laughing stock to the inhabitants ; and afterwards arraigned them before the magistrates ; and, though chargeable with no crime, procured them a month's imprisonment, and seven of them to be bound over to the next assize, or county court.\* Another attempt appears to have been more successful, and Mr. Clifton and several members of his church reached Amsterdam in safety.

Those who first went over with their pastor, connected themselves with the English churches already established in Amsterdam. Mr. Smyth, the pastor of one of these churches, soon embraced the sentiments of the Dutch Remonstrants, who were Arminians ; and also imbibed some "peculiar opinions on the validity of the administration of baptism."† These opinions occasioned his separation from his exiled friends—they being generally staunch Calvinists and paedo-baptists—and the formation of a new sect, which has since been known as *The General Baptists*. Mr. Smyth, considering himself as unbaptized, and knowing of no one qualified, in his judgment, to administer the ordinance ; and believing it improper to engage in any ministerial act, even so much as public prayer, much less the formation of a church,—until baptism had been administered,—proceeded first to re-baptize himself, by immer-

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\* Bradford, in Hutchinson's His. of Mass. Vol. II.—Appendix No. 1.

† Hanbury, p. 179.



sion ; and then to immerse Mr. Helwisse, his associate, and several others, his followers.\*

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\* Ivimey (His. Eng. Baptists) and Toulmin, in his note on Neal, (His. Pur. I. p. 72,) speak of this as a “*silly charge*” \* \* *fabricated* by Smyth’s enemies ;” and as a “*slander*” upon his memory. The following passage upon the subject, from the candid and excellent Mr. Robinson, must, I think, be conclusive on this point : “If the church be gathered by baptism, then Mr. Helwisse’s church appear to all men to be built upon the sand, considering the baptism it had and hath. Which was, as I have heard from THEMSELVES, on this manner ;—Mr. Smyth, Mr. Helwisse, and the rest, having utterly dissolved and disclaimed their former church state, and ministry, came together to erect a new church by baptism ; unto which, they also ascribed so great virtue as that they would not so much as pray together before they had it. And, after some straining of courtesy who should begin, and that John the Baptist, Matt. 3: 14, misalleged, Mr. Smyth baptized first himself, and next Mr. Helwisse, and so the rest, making their particular confessions. Now, to let pass his not *sanctifying* a public action by public prayer, his taking ‘unto himself’ that ‘honor’ which was not given him either immediately from Christ or by the church ; his baptizing himself, which was more than Christ himself did ;—I demand—Into what church he entered by baptism ? Or, entering by baptism into no church—How his baptism could be true, by their own doctrine ? Or Mr. Smyth’s baptism not being true ; nor he, by it, entering into any church—How Mr. Helwisse’s baptism could be true ; or into what church he entered by it ?”

Smyth seems to have been a man of talents ; but according to Neal, a man “*of an unsettled head.*”—Vol. II. p. 71. Ainsworth says of him : “In three sundry books he hath showed himself of three several religions.”—Hanbury, p. 179. Robinson speaks of “his instability and wantonness of wit.”—Ib. p. 209. He certainly was *singular* in his opinions as well as variable.—He condemned the use of an English translation of the Bible ; averring that teachers should carry the original Hebrew or Greek Testament into the public assembly “and out of them translate by voice.”—He maintained also, that the money contributed by the

These things, of necessity, laid the foundation for controversy and difficulty between the exiles, which materially influenced Mr. Robinson and his brethren in their subsequent movements.

Mr. Clyfton, on going to Amsterdam, found the ancient exiled church under Johnson and Ainsworth, divided in sentiment upon the question, whether the elders were authorized to act authoritatively in church matters, independently of the church. Johnson maintained the affirmative of the question: Clyfton sided with him, and became a teacher in that church, in the place of Ainsworth, who dissented from Johnson, and finally separated, with his followers, from the ancient church.

In the spring of 1608, the remaining number of Mr. Clyfton's and Robinson's church,\* made arrangements for removing to Holland.† Having sold their estates, and put

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impenitent part of the congregation should be kept separate from the gifts of the pious, and be appropriated to "common use."—He also objected to singing, as a part of public worship.

Neal says he removed to the city of Ley, and there died; Hanbury says, in 1610. But John Cotton says: "I understand by such as lived in those parts at that time, he lived at *Amsterdam*, and there died; and at *Ley*, in *Holland*, he never came."—"Way of Congregational churches," Sec V. p. 7. Neal represents his congregation as being "dissolved" by his death. But, Ivimey tells us, that Helwisse, Mr. Smyth's associate, removed with the church to London, soon after 1611; and constituted the first Baptist church in England. They returned to England under the impression that flight in time of persecution was sinful.

\* It seems probable that Mr. Robinson was chosen pastor, of the North of England church, or at least *acted* as such, immediately upon Mr. Clyfton's removal to Holland.

† Mr. Robbins, in his *Historical Review*, says, they first contemplated removing to America—(p. 41): he does not, however, give his authority for the assertion; and I can find no intimation of the kind elsewhere.

themselves in readiness for their departure, they engaged a Dutch captain to take them on board from an unfrequented common, remote from any house, between Hull and Grimsby, (or Grimestone, as Bradford calls it,) near the mouth of the river Humber. The women and children, with all the baggage, were sent down the river in a bark : while the men went by land. They all arrived at the place of embarkation a day before the ship. The sea was rough, and the females were sick : this induced the mariners, who had charge of the bark, to put into a small creek, and there await the arrival of the Dutch ship. The next morning she came ; but the tide was out, and the bark was aground and could not be got off. The captain of the vessel seeing the men on the beach, sent his boats and took on board a number of them ; as the sailors were about to return for a second load, “ the master espied a great company, both horse and foot, with bills, and guns, and other weapons, for the country was raised to take them. The Dutchman seeing that, swore his country oath, ‘ *sacramenti*,’ and having the wind fair, weighed anchor, hoisted sail and away.” The men on land might all have escaped ; but a part of them going to the rescue of the women and children, were taken with them. And, “ pitiful it was to see the heavy case of these poor women in distress ; what weeping and crying on every side, some for their husbands, that were carried away in the ship ; others not knowing what should become of them and their little ones, crying for fear and quaking with cold.”\*

The captives were dragged from one justice to another, with the hope of finding some one to convict and imprison them. Finding, however, nothing against them, and not knowing what to do with such a number of distressed and

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\* Bradford, in Hutchinson, ut sup.

helpless women and children, their persecutors at length dismissed them, to find a shelter as they could, among their friends;—homes, they had none.

In the mean time, those on board the ship, separated from their friends and families, and destitute even of a change of clothing, endured a terrible storm, and narrowly escaped foundering at sea. After fourteen days of peril and suffering, they at length reached Amsterdam; and there found, among their exiled countrymen who had preceded them, a resting place from the raging elements and from the wrath of man.

In subsequent attempts to escape from England, the poor church were more successful; and in the course of the year, the divided families, and separated friends were permitted to embrace each other in a foreign land—but a land of religious liberty.

Mr. Robinson, and his college friend and endeared associate in the care of the afflicted church, Elder Brewster, were the last to leave their native shores; “having tarried, to help the weakest over before them.”\*

Arrived in Holland, they found the exiled churches in Amsterdam divided in sentiment, as has been already related. Their ancient friend and fellow sufferer, Smyth, and his church,—to whom the new comers seem first to have attached themselves—were at war with the London church, under Mr. Johnson; and were fast verging into Arminianism, and other errors: and Mr. Johnson and his church were far from being perfectly agreed among themselves. It did not require much time for such men as Mr. Robinson and Mr. Brewster, to foresee, that, if they and their friends remained at Amsterdam, it would be well nigh impossible to avoid falling into the contentions which were beginning

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\* Bradford.

to show themselves. They, therefore, wisely proposed to the church to remove to Leyden ; a city about nineteen miles from Amsterdam. This arrangement, though attended with much inconvenience, and " though they knew it would be very much to the prejudice of their outward interest, as it proved to be ; yet, valuing peace and spiritual comfort above other riches,"\* the church soon determined to move. They accordingly, about a year after their arrival in Holland, removed to Leyden ; between the close of the year 1608 and April of 1609.

Mr. Clyfton, and probably some members of the original North-of-England church, remained at Amsterdam, where Mr. Clyfton died, sometime after the year 1612.†

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\* Bradford, in Prince.

† Belknap, and others after him, have supposed that *Clyfton* (I follow the orthography of his contemporaries) died before the arrival in Amsterdam of Robinson and Brewster, with the remnant of their church.—See Am. Biog. Art. Robinson, Vol. II. p. 157. Balies' Memorial, Vol. I. p. 11.

These writers are, however, evidently mistaken, as appears from the fact that Clyfton published, in 1612, a work entitled, " An Advertizement concerning a book lately published by Christopher Lawne and others against the English exiled church at Amsterdam, by Richard Clyfton, Teacher of the same Church." Now this was three or four years, at least, after Robinson and his church had removed to Leyden. The church of which Clyfton was teacher at Amsterdam, was Johnson's ; from which Ainsworth and his friends separated about December, 1610. It seems altogether likely that Clyfton was alive in 1613 ; for we have a work of Ainsworth's, under that date, entitled " An Animadversion to Mr. Richard Clyfton's Advertizement, etc. Amst., A. D. 1613." Clyfton was a man of learning and talents ; and, like all the leading Separatists, an able controversial writer. Ainsworth once spoke of him and Robinson, as "*two worthy soldiers of Christ.*" To be coupled

## CHAPTER XIX.

## MR. ROBINSON'S CHURCH IN LEYDEN.—HIS WRITINGS.

Arrived in Leyden, the members of the exiled church made the best arrangements in their power to procure a comfortable subsistence. This, however, was no easy task. Most of the brethren had been trained to husbandry ; but in a populous city,—a city of islands, intersected in every direction by the different streams of the Rhone and numerous canals—there was, of course, little scope for farmers. The exiles were, therefore, obliged to devote themselves to trades, and almost any lawful calling which the wants of the city encouraged. William Bradford, afterwards the governor of Plymouth, bound himself out as an apprentice to a silkdyer. Elder Brewster, after expending a handsome fortune in the service of this poor church, found employment as a school-master among the Dutch : and after a while obtained means to open a printing-office ; in which were printed many valuable books against the hierarchy, which could not get license in England.\*

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with John Robinson is sufficient honor to any man.—See Hanbury, p. 180, and Chap. 14, *passim*.

Elder William Brewster, of whom I intend to speak more fully in the sequel of the history of this church, deserves a passing notice here. He was a gentleman of education and fortune ; both of which he devoted to the cause of this poor church, over which he was made a ruler. His house in England was the place of their public meetings ; and his table the support of all who came. He suffered severely by the persecution and removals of the church ; and was finally reduced to comparative penury. He was every way a fit associate for such a man as John Robinson.

\* Mr. Thatcher (History of Plymouth) says, that a Latin copy

Our ancestors were honest, and laborious in their respective callings ; and the Dutch soon learned to value them as customers or laborers. By patient industry and exemplary uprightness, they were able to secure a moderate but comfortable living in the city of their exile. In the mean time their number gradually increased by emigrations from England, until the church contained *three hundred* communicants.

*Controversy with Hall and Bernard about Separation, etc.*

All this time their devoted pastor was not idle. Besides preaching " thrice a week " and " other manifold labors," Mr. Robinson found time to write " sundry books." The first work which came from his pen after his removal from England, was written at Amsterdam, near the close of the year 1609 ; and entitled " An Answer to a Censorious Epistle." This " Epistle " was written by Joseph Hall, afterwards bishop Hall ; ycleped " the *moderate* bishop Hall : " but, judging from his reply to Robinson, '*moderate*' was a sad misnomer when applied to Hall.

The leading design of Robinson in his " Answer, etc. " seems to have been, to state briefly the grounds on which he and his brethren had separated from the Church of England. And this he does with his characteristic clearness ; with comprehensive brevity ; in a style both terse and chaste ; with point and spirit ; and yet, with courtesy, and a freedom from unchristian acrimony, the more noticeable, because so unlike the controversial style of that age.\*

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of Cartwright's Commentaries on the Book of Proverbs, published at Elder Brewster's press, 1617, is now in the possession of the pastor of the first church in Plymouth, Mass.

\* The work is entire in Hanbury's XIth chapter. The scarcity and value of the tract has induced me to place the whole of it in the Appendix No. 2.

Near the close of the next year, 1610, Mr. Robinson published another work of the same general character with that just noticed, though much more voluminous; entitled, "A Justification of Separation from the Church of England. Against Mr. Richard Bernard, his invective, intituled, 'The Separatist's Schism.' By John Robinson. Gen. 1: 4. 2 Cor. 6: 14.—Anno D. 1610." Quarto. pp. 476—9.

Bernard appears to have been a conforming Puritan, vicar of Worksop, a small town near the northern borders of Nottinghamshire. This was the neighborhood in which the churches of Mr. Clyfton and Mr. Smyth were originally gathered. Bernard himself, at one time, seems to have been well disposed towards the Separation, and to have actually formed a portion of his own congregation into a sort of Separate church. Whether this was a stroke of policy, to prevent his people from joining Mr. Smyth's church, or the result of honest conviction, is not altogether certain. However this may have been, it is certain that Mr. Bernard turned to be the enemy of the Separatists; and came forth, as Ainsworth says, "to fight against the Truth, which, but a while since, he would needs seem to favor: but things not succeeding according to his expectation, he hath changed his love into hatred." \*

Bernard's attack upon his former friends called forth three answers; the fullest is that of Mr. Robinson, now under consideration. The spirit of the work is very much like the preceding; the style is somewhat more free and diffuse; because designed for a particular answer to Bernard, and a popular defence and justification of himself and friends separating from the Church of England. Robinson seems to have known his opponent well—probably from their vicinage in England—and he tells the world some

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\* In Hanbury, p. 173, and elsewhere, to p. 179.



things about him for which Bernard could not have been very grateful.

As this work brings out very distinctly Mr. Robinson's views of church polity, it cannot but be acceptable to the reader to have a few passages from this "father of the Independents." I shall quote entire paragraphs, but not always in consecutive order, from different parts of the volume. The heading of the paragraphs is mine.

INTRODUCTION.—"For myself, as I could much rather have desired to have built up myself, and that poor flock over which the Holy Ghost hath set me, in holy peace,—as becometh the house of God, wherein no sound of axe, or hammer, or other tool of iron, is to be heard, 1 Kings 6: 7,—than thus to enter the lists of contention; so being justly called to contend for the defence of that truth upon which this man, amongst others, lays violent hands, I will endeavor in all good conscience, as before God, so to free the same, as I will be nothing less than contentious in contention, but will count it a victory to be overcome in odious provocations and reproaches, both by him and others. . . It were no hard thing for our adversaries to oppress us with the multitude of books; considering both how few and how feeble we are in comparison, besides other outward difficulties; if the truth we hold, which is stronger than all, did not support itself."

POWER OF THE CHURCH.—"Touching 'the proper subject' of the power of Christ, he tells Bernard, Where the Papists plant it in 'the Pope;' the Protestants in 'the Bishops;' the Puritans, as you term the reformed churches and those of their mind, in 'the Presbytery;' we, whom you name 'Brownists,' put it in 'the body of the congregation,—the multitude called the Church;' odiously insinuating against us, that we do exclude the Elders in the case of government,

where, on the contrary, we profess the Bishops or Elders to be the only ordinary governors in the church, as in all other actions of the church's communion, so, also, in the censures. Only *we* may not acknowledge them for 'lords over God's heritage,' 1 Pet. 5: 3, as *you* would make them, — 'controlling all, but to be controlled by none;' much less essential unto the church, as though it could not be without them; least of all, the church itself, as you would expound Matt. xviii. But *we* hold the Eldership, as other ordinances, given unto the church for her service; and so, the Elders or Officers, the 'servants and ministers' of the church, 2 Cor. 4: 5. Col. 1: 25; the wife, under Christ her husband." . .

STATE OF THE QUESTION.—"I doubt not but Mr. Bernard and a thousand more ministers in the land; were they secure of the magistrate's sword, and might they go on with his good license; would wholly shake off their canonical obedience to their Ordinaries, and neglect their citations and censures, and refuse to sue in their courts, for all 'the peace of the church' which they commend to us for so sacred a thing! Could they but obtain license from the magistrate to use the 'liberty' which they are persuaded Christ hath given them, they would soon shake off the prelates' yoke, and draw no longer, under the same, in spiritual communion with all the profane in the land; but would break those bonds of iniquity, as easily as Sampson did the cords wherewith Dalilah tied him, and give good reasons also, from the Word of God for their so doing. And yet the approbation of men and angels makes the ways of God, and works of religion, never a whit the more lawful, but only the more free from bodily danger. Whereupon we, the weakest of all others, have been persuaded to embrace this truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, though in great and manifold afflictions, and to

hold out His testimony as we do, though without approbation of our sovereign, knowing that as his approbation, in such points of God's worship, as his Word warranteth not, cannot make them lawful ; so neither can his disallowance make unlawful such duties of religion as the Word of God approveth ; nor can he give dispensation to any person to forbear the same. Dan. 3: 18. Acts 5: 29."

CHURCH POLITY.—"Wise men, having written of this subject, have approved as good and lawful, three kinds of polities,—monarchical, where supreme authority is in the hands of one ; aristocratical, when it is in the hands of some few select persons ; and democratical, in the whole body or multitude. And all these three forms have their places in the Church of Christ. In respect of Him, the HEAD, it is a monarchy ; in respect of the Eldership, an aristocracy ; in respect of the Body, a popular state."

AUTHORITY OF CHURCH OFFICERS.—"Ministers and church-governors have no such authority tied to their office [as civil magistrates have], but merely to the Word of God. And as the People's *obedience* stands not in making the Elders their lords, sovereigns, and judges, but in listening to their godly counsels ; in following their wise directions ; in receiving their holy instructions, exhortations, consolations, and admonitions ; and in using their faithful service and ministry ; so neither stands the Elders' *government* in erecting any tribunal-seat or throne of judgment over the People, but in exhorting, instructing, comforting, and improving them by the Word of God, 1 Tim. 3: 16 ; and in affording the Lord and them their best service. But here it will be demanded of me, If the Elders be not set over the Church for her guidance and government ? Yes, certainly, as the physician is set over the body, for his skill and faithfulness to minister unto it, to whom the patient, yea, though his lord

or master, is to submit ; — the lawyer over his cause, to attend unto it ; — the steward over his family, even his wife and children, to make provision for them ; — yea, the watchmen over the whole city, for the sake of safe-keeping thereof. Such and none other, is the Elders' or Bishops' government."

AUTHORITY OF THE BRETHREN.—“ In the church, all and every ordinance concerns every person, as a part of their communion,—without the dispensation of necessity,—for their use and edification, 1 Cor. 3: 22. 14: 26 ; all the Officers to be chosen by suffrages and consent of ‘ the multitude,’ Acts 1: 15, 23, 26. 6: 1—3, 5. 14: 23. 15: 2, 3. 2 Cor. 8: 19, 23. The Brethren are to admonish their brethren of every violation of God’s commandment ; and so, in order, to ‘ tell the church,’ Matt. 18: 15, 17, 18, and to see the parties reformed : to observe and to take notice of the Officers’ carriage and ministration ; and to ‘ say to Archippus,’ as there is need, ‘ Take heed to thy ministry that thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it,’ Col. 4: 17 ; and if the Ministers will deal corruptly, and so persevere in the spirit of profaneness, heresy, idolatry, or atheism, to censure, depose, reject, or avoid them, Matt. 18: 17. Rom. 16: 17, 18. Gal. 5: 12. 1 Tim. 6: 3—5. 2 Tim. 3: 1—5. Tit. 3: 10, 11 ; otherwise they betray their own souls, and salvation.”

OLD TEST. AND NEW TEST. CHURCHES.—“ The *order* of the Old Testament was the order of a National Church ; but the order of the New Testament is the order of a Particular Church, wherein there needs no such subordination of Ministries as in the other which was National. The eye of common sense sees this difference.”

WOMEN’S RIGHTS.—“ Women are debarred by their sex, as from ordinary prophesying, so from any other dealing wherein they take authority over the man, 1 Cor. 14: 34, 35.

1 Tim. 2: 11, 12, yet not simply from speaking. They may make profession of faith or confession of sin ; say amen to the church's prayers ; sing psalms vocally ; accuse a brother of sin ; witness an accusation, or defend themselves, being accused ; yea, in a case extraordinary, namely, where no man will, I see not but a woman may reprove the church, rather than suffer it to go on in apparent wickedness, and communicate with it therein. Now for children, and such as are not of years of discretion, God and nature dispenseth with them, as for not communicating in the Lord's supper now, so under the Law for not offering sacrifices, from which none of years were exempted : neither is there respect of persons with God, in the common duties of Christianity."

GATHERING OF A CHURCH.—“ And for the *gathering of a church*, I do tell you, That in what place soever, by what means soever ; whether by preaching the Gospel by a true Minister, by a false Minister, by no Minister,—or by reading, conference, or any other means of publishing it,—two or three Faithful people do arise, separating themselves from the world into the fellowship of the Gospel and covenant of Abraham, *they* are a Church, truly gathered, though never so weak ; a house and temple of God, rightly *founded* upon the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, ‘ Christ himself being the corner-stone,’ Eph. 2: 20, against which, ‘ the gates of hell shall not prevail,’ Matt. 16: 18, nor your disgraceful invectives either.”

DISCIPLINE OF OFFICERS.—“ If the officers be the church, I would know, if one of them fall into scandalous sin and will not be reclaimed, what must then be done ? It will be answered, that the rest [of the officers] must censure him. But what if there be but two in all, must the one excommunicate the other ? The ruling Elder, it may be, the Pastor ? If the rest of the Elders, being many, may displace the

Pastor by their authority, they may also place him, and set him up by their authority ; and so the poor Laity is stript of all liberty or power of choosing their officers ; contrary to the Scriptures."

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.—"The *bond* between the Minister and people, is the most strait and near religious bond that may be ; and, therefore, not to be entered but with *mutual* consent . . . It makes much, both for the provocation of the Minister unto all diligence and faithfulness ; and also, for his comfort in all the trials and temptations which befall him in his ministry, when he considereth how the People unto whom he ministereth have committed that most rich treasure of their souls, in the Lord—yea, I may say, of their very 'faith' and 'joy,' to be *helped* forward unto salvation—to his care and charge, by their free and voluntary choice of him. . . Acts 20: 28, 29. John 10: 9, 12, 13. Acts 6: 1—5. 2 Cor. 1: 24. It much furthers the love of the People to the person of their minister, and so, consequently, their obedience unto his doctrine and government, when he is such a one, as *themselves*, in duty unto God and love of their own salvation, *have made choice of* ; as, on the contrary, it leaves them without excuse if they either perfidiously forsake or unprofitably use such a man's holy service and ministration. Lastly, it is agreeable to all equity and reason that all free persons and estates should choose their own servants, and them unto whom they give wages and maintenance for their labour and service. But so it is betwixt the People and Ministers : the People a free people, and the Church a free estate spiritual, under Christ the King ; the Ministers, the Church's, as Christ's servants ;' and so by the Church's provision to 'live,' and of her, as 'labourers' to receive wages. Rom. 15: 31. 2 Cor. 4: 5. 1 Cor. 9: 14. 1 Tim. 5: 18."

ORDINATION.—“ I will here interpose some few things touching ‘ succession,’ and ‘ ordination’ accordingly. First, then, we acknowledge, that in the right and orderly state of things, no ministers are to be ordained but by ministers, the latter by the former in the churches where they are, and over which the Holy Ghost hath set them. . . The Prelates, and those which level by their line, do highly advance Ordination, and far above the administration of the word, sacraments, and prayer ; making it, and the power of excommunication, the two incommunicable prerogatives of a *bishop*, in their understanding, above an ordinary minister. But surely, herein *these* chief ministers do not succeed the chief ministers, the apostles, except as darkness succeeds light ; and Antichrist’s confusion, Christ’s order. Where the apostles were sent out by Christ, there was no mention of Ordination ; their charge was to ‘ go, teach all nations, and baptize them ;’ and that the apostles accounted Preaching their principal work, and after it, baptism and prayer, the Scriptures manifest. Acts 6: 4. 1 Cor. 1: 17. And if Ordination had been, in those days, so prime a work, surely Paul would rather have tarried in Crete himself, to have ordained Elders there, and have sent Titus, an inferior officer, about that inferior work of Preaching, than have gone himself about that, leaving Titus for the other ! Tit. 1: 5.”

*Controversy with Episcopus, the Arminian.*

It was during the years 1612, 1613, that the controversy between the Arminians and Calvinists raged with the greatest violence at Leyden. Episcopus, who had just then been made professor of divinity in the university of Leyden, was the champion of the Arminian party. Polyander, an older professor in the university, headed the Calvinistic party. The two professors divided the students among them-

selves, and opposed each other with great earnestness in their respective lecture-rooms. Mr. Robinson, ever on the alert to understand all truth, found time, notwithstanding his pressing engagements, to attend the lectures of both professors. These opportunities, added to his own accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, and his familiar acquaintance with the entire circle of theology, made him a complete master of the whole controversy. This, Polyander and his friends were not slow to discover : and when Episcopius sent forth his Arminian *theses*, with the offer to defend them publicly against all opponents, the Calvinists urged Mr. Robinson to accept the challenge, and to meet the Professor in a public dispute. This proposal Mr. Robinson at first declined, being a modest man, and withal a stranger in the city and an exiled foreigner : but being urgently solicited to undertake the defence of the truth, as preeminently qualified for the task, he at last consented. Twice or thrice he met the champion of Arminianism in a public disputation ; and, as Governor Bradford assures us, “ puts him to an apparent *non-plus*, in a great and public audience ;” \* \* “ which, as it causes many to give praise to God that the truth had so famous a victory ; so it procures Mr. Robinson much respect and honor from those learned men and others.” \*

### *The Baptismal Controversy.*

In the year 1614 we find Mr. Robinson engaged in a defence of the Separation against the attack of Mr. Helwisse, the Arminian Baptist, the associate of Mr. Smyth in his new organization.† The character of the work may be judged of by the title, which, according to the fashion of the day, was pretty full : “ Of Religious Communion : Private and Public. With the silencing of the Clamours raised by

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\* In Prince, pp. 126—131.

† See page 318 of this work.



Mr. Thomas Helwisse against our retaining the Baptism received in England : and administering of Baptism unto Infants. As also a Survey of the Confession of Faith, published in certain conclusions, by the remainders of Mr. Smyth's company : Prov. 14 : 15. By John Robinson, 614." Quarto, pp. 131. "The remainders of Mr. Smyth's Company" were Mr. Helwisse's church, already noticed, who removed to London.

The author's design led him first, to define and defend the sentiments of the Separation respecting private and public communion with churches not scripturally organized. In respect to the former, he thus expresses himself : "I come to the thing I aim at in this whole discourse, which is, That we who profess a separation from the English national, provincial, diocesan, and parochial church and churches, in the whole formal state and order thereof, may, notwithstanding, lawfully communicate in private prayer, and other the like holy exercises,—not performed in their church communion, nor by their church-power and ministry,—with the godly amongst them ; though remaining, of infirmity, members of the same church or churches ; except some other extraordinary bar come in the way between them and us."

He next proceeds to justify separation from public communion with anti-scriptural churches ;—such a communion as would be a virtual recognition of them as true churches. He says : "As we are, then, to join ourselves with them wherein God hath joined us ; so are we, wherein He severeth us, to sequester and sever ourselves." What is next to be shown, accordingly, is this, "If the parish-assemblies, gathered by compulsion\* of all the parishioners pro-

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\* It must not be lost sight of, that this was really the case, in those days, by the Statute of Uniformity, 1 Eliz. cap. 2.

miscuously, etc. be of God; then is our fellowship only of persons sanctified, at least outwardly, joining themselves by voluntary profession under the government and ministry of an eldership; conceiving prayers and thanksgiving according to the church's present occasions, by the teachings of the Spirit; and so administering the sacraments according to the simplicity of the Gospel,—not of God, nor from heaven. If, on the contrary, ours be of God and of his Christ; then is theirs of Antichrist. . . . Either the one or the other are plantings, which God 'hath not planted,' and 'shall be rooted up.'"\* This proposition he proceeds to establish by defining the scriptural meaning of the Hebrew word *קָהָל* 'kahal,' and the Greek *ἐκκλησία*, [ecclesia] called by us church; that to this true New Testament church, appertain† the covenant and promises, etc.; with all holy things.‡ It follows, that a church truly constituted "must be of such persons as by and in whom God will and may thus be worshipped and glorified; and as are by Him, both in their persons and fellowship, separated and sanctified thereunto."

He next passes to an explanation and defence of their church government. The Separatists were much pressed by the Hierarchy and others with this objection to their government.—That it was *popular* or *democratical*, and tended to the overthrow of the *throne*, as well as the established *Church* of England. Our ancestors appear to have been sincere monarchists; and were, therefore, very solicitous to rebut this objection to their system of church government. This, however, was not an easy task; for it was a fundamental point in the Separatist's system, that the church—i. e., the brethren constituting each church—was the depository of all ecclesiastical authority—was the

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\* Matt. 15: 13,

† Rom. 9: 4.

‡ 1 Cor. 3: 21, 22.

supreme and last appeal in all controversies ; or in other words—That all ecclesiastical power was really in the churches of Christ, as bodies politic, organized by the will, and agreeably to the directions of Christ, revealed in the New Testament. It could not, therefore, but be a difficult task for our ancestors to show that their church government was not *popular*, and diametrically opposed to the prevalent, and oppressive despotism under which England then groaned. Mr. Robinson's work, now before us, furnished a good sample of the method of meeting this objection ; while it explains pretty fully the ecclesiastical doctrines and practice of our ancestors.

He says : Because “ many loud clamors of ‘anabaptistry,’ and ‘popularity,’ are raised against our government, I think it meet briefly to insert a few things touching our profession and practice therein.—The government of the church, then, as it is taken most strictly for the outward ordering, directing, and guidance of the same church in her affairs,—for in a more general sense, the whole administration of Christ's kingdom, by himself or others, inwardly or outwardly, publicly or privately, may be comprehended under the ‘government’ of the church,—we place in the *Bishops* or *Elders* thereof ; called by Christ and the church, to ‘feed,’ that is to ‘teach’ and ‘rule’ the same.\* Which their government, and the nature thereof, I will plainly lay down in such particulars as wherein the people's liberty is greatest ; which are reduced to these three heads, Exercise of prophesying ; Choice of officers ; Censuring of offenders.” We cannot forbear presenting the particulars under those heads, so far as they illustrate the practice of our earliest predecessors.

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\* Acts 20 : 17, 20. 1 Tim. 5 : 17.

PROPHESYING.—“ For the Exercise of Prophesying ; wherein men, though *not* in office, have liberty to move and propound their ‘ questions,’\* and doubts for satisfaction as also having ‘ received’ a ‘ gift, to administer the same’ unto ‘ edification, exhortation, and comfort :’† as, then, Paul and Barnabas coming ‘ into the synagogue’ of the Jews, where they were no officers, ‘ the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, after the lecture of the law,’ if they had ‘ any word of exhortation to the people,’ to ‘ say on,’‡—which order the Jews also observe in their synagogues at this day ;—so with us, the Officers, after their ordinary teaching, signify and exhort unto the use of the like liberty in that and the other particulars formerly named : and so, as there is occasion, open and explain things obscure and doubtful ; reprove things unsound and impertinent ; and so order, moderate, and determine the whole exercise, by the Word of God. And in this, I suppose, it appears to all men that the officers govern.”

CHOICE OF OFFICERS.—“ For the choice of Officers ; we do take for our direction the practices of the apostles and apostolical churches,§ grounded upon a perpetual equity, that men should choose them under Christ, unto whose faithfulness, under the same Christ, and by his appointment, they are to commit themselves and their souls ; and them, as Christ’s and their servants, to maintain. In any one of which examples, the conscience of a godly man is better established, than in all the canons of Popes or Prelates, or other devices of Politic men whatsoever, departing from the apostolical simplicity. It is evident, in Acts vi., that although the *calling* did chiefly depend upon ‘ the multitude,’ yet did the *government* of the whole action lie upon

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\* Luke 2: 46. † Rom. 12: 6. 1 Pet. 4: 10. 1 Cor. 14: 3.

‡ Acts. 13: 14, 15. § Acts 1: 6: 14.

the officers. Conformable whereunto, is our practice, so near as we can, upon the like occasions."

CENSURES.—"Lastly, For our Direction in the public use of Censures; we propound to ourselves the rule of Christ, Matt. 18: 17, touching sins private in themselves, but to be made public by the sinner's refusing to hear admonition; and with it, the practice thereof by the doctrine of His apostle, 1 Cor. v., about a sin of public nature. . . For neither could the apostle, being but one, be the church or congregation, which consists of 'two' or 'three,' that is a company though never so small 'gathered together in Christ's name,' as he expounds himself, Matt. 18: 20. . . Answerable to the course by Christ and the apostles, there directed, and by the Corinthians observed, as appeareth, 2 Cor. 2: 6, we desire our practice may be. In which, sins scandalous, if in themselves of public nature, are brought to the church by one of the officers; or if private, and to be made public by the sinner's impenitency, by the Brother offended and his Witnesses, at the Officer's appointment. Where the sin, being manifested, and for fact orderly proved against the offender, is by the Elders condemned, and rebuked by the Word of God, and the sinner exhorted to repentance, according to the quality of the sin. In which conviction and admonition, lawfully and sufficiently made, the Church resteth: the Men manifesting their assent thereunto by some convenient word or sign, and the women by silence. And so, the admonition which before was Christ's and the Officers' becomes the Church's; following the others as their governors, and not otherwise. . . The *impenitent* sinner is, for his humbling, to be cut off and excommunicated from the fellowship of the church. The Elders, as governors, going before in decreeing the sentence, and so one of them, upon the People's assent, as in admonition, pronouncing it in the Name of Christ and His Church."

CHURCH MEETINGS ON THE LORD'S DAY.—“ We think it lawful for the Brethren either doubtful of anything in the Officers' administrations, to propound their doubt, for satisfaction ; or, seeing them failing in any material thing, to admonish them of their duty, and that they look to their office ;\* or if need stand, to supply the same for the further clearing of things. And this whole proceeding, we make and use, ordinarily, on the Lord's day, as being properly the Lord's work ; a work of Religion, directly respecting the soul and conscience ; and of spiritual nature, as being an administration of Christ's ‘ kingdom,’ which is ‘ not of this world.’† And this also, when the whole church is ‘ gathered’ together,‡ as which, it concerneth many ways. . . By our weakness, it cometh to pass that this comely order is sometimes interrupted, and human frailties intermingle themselves, either by the Officers' fault in not governing, or the People's in not obeying as they ought ; so as we are at times overtaken with some things both disorderly and difficult to determine ; as it also cometh to pass in all assemblies and governments of and by men whatsoever : and as in nature, etc. But things are not to be defined by their abuses.”

“ The Order of our Government, then, being such as I have described it, let every indifferent [impartial] reader judge whether or not, in respect of outward order, it be Popular, and wherein the People *govern*, as many please to reproach us and it. But if men will . . yet open their mouths against us for Popularity and Anabaptistry, we can but commit both ourselves and cause to God.”

Another division of this answer to Helwisse takes up the subject of baptism ; where the reader will find many of the soundest and best arguments which have ever been urged

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\* Colos. 4: 17.

† John 17: 33.

‡ 1 Cor. 5: 4, 5.

in favor of infant baptism, and against the practice of our Baptist brethren, in *re*-baptising such as have received the ordinance in infancy.

Though this matter does not fall so directly within the design of this work, as the other topics already introduced, I shall be excused for inserting a paragraph or two, illustrative of Mr. Robinson's sentiments, and his method of treating this subject.

RE-BAPTISM.—“I would know of these double-washers, whether if a man professing the same faith with them in holiness outwardly, but in hypocrisy, should be baptized by them; and that afterwards his heart should strike him, and God give him true repentance,—let it be the person they know of, that fled from *us* under admonition for sin, and joining to and being baptized by them, was presently after by *themselves* found in the same sin, and so censured,—whether, I say, they would *repeat* their outward washing formerly made as none, because there was not joined with it the inward washing of the Spirit? Or if they think it none, and so the forementioned person not indeed received in by baptism, as they speak, wherefore did they then excommunicate the same person?”

WHAT IS BAPTISM?—“If the washing with water ‘in the name of the Father, etc.,’ of a fit person by a lawful minister, in a lawful communion and manner, be true baptism, truly and lawfully administered; then, is washing with water, ‘in the name, etc.,’ by an unlawful minister, of an unfit subject, and in an unsanctified communion and manner, true baptism unlawfully and falsely administered. The thing done is the same in both; the difference is only in the manner of doing it. . . An oath taken in earnest, and for a thing lawful, though profanely, bindeth him that took it”

INFANT BAPTISM.—Treating expressly “Of the Baptism of Infants,” Robinson meets his opposite on the question of the “old and new covenants,” their nature and applicability ; and having prepared his way, he maintains the proposition “That the Infants of the Faithful are within the compass of the New Covenant here spoken of.” He begins by placing the opponents in this dilemma : “Since all children coming naturally from Adam are conceived and born ‘in sin,’\* and ‘by nature the children of wrath ;’† if these men believe, as they do of all, that their children so dying shall be saved by Christ, then must they have a part in His Testament, or in this new covenant. There are not two new covenants or testaments established in the blood of Christ, but one. And since Christ is propounded unto us as ‘the Saviour’ of the ‘body,’ which is his ‘church,’‡ it is more than strange that these men will have all Infants to be saved, and yet none of them to be of His ‘body,’ or ‘church !’ ”

“We require of *them* proof, How children are cast out of the church and baptism thereof ; and, how the grace of God is so shortened by Christ’s coming in the flesh, as to cast out of the church the greatest part of the church before,—the Infants of believers ? The Lord Jesus sent out his apostles to ‘teach’ or make disciples ‘all nations,’ and to ‘baptize them ;’§ opposing ‘all nations’ to that one nation of the Jews. As if he should have said thus,—I have formerly declared my will to that one nation, and circumcised it ; ‘go’ you now, and ‘teach *all* nations’ and baptize them. Now, if Christ’s meaning had been, that they should not with the parents,—being made disciples, and baptized—baptize the children ; as before they had with the parents,—being made disciples, and circumcised,—

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\* Psal. 51: 5. † Eph. 2: 3. ‡ Eph. 5: 23. Col. 1: 18. § Matt. 23: 19.



circumcised the children; it had been needful he had given them a caveat, to leave the children of the Faithful out in the world, though they had formerly been in the church ! If it be objected, that they who were taught, and believed, were to be baptized, *therefore not Infants* ; I deny the consequence. Which should be, if it were true,—and *therefore not Infidels*, and such as refuse the gospel. And this is the opposition which the Scriptures make ; setting impenitent and unbelieving persons against the penitent and believing, and not children against their parents ; which is *childish* to imagine !”

### *Plea for Prophecy.*

The next work of Mr. Robinson's prolific pen bears date 1618 ; and is entitled : “ The People's Plea for the Exercise of Prophecy : against Mr. John Yates, his Monopoly. By John Robinson.—1 Cor. 14: 1.—Printed in the year 1618.” 16mo. pp. 77.

The object of this little work was to defend the practice of the Separatists, in allowing the brethren of the church to express their views in public after the preacher had finished his discourse. This practice was retained many years by the Leyden and Plymouth church ; and, probably, laid the foundation for the religious conference meetings, now so common among Congregationalists.

### *Robinson's “ Apology.”*

The next year came out Mr. Robinson's celebrated “ Apology.” It was originally published in Latin, under the following title : “ Apologia justa et necessaria quorundam Christianorum, aequè contumeliose ac communiter dictorum ‘ Brownistarum ’ ac ‘ Barrowistarum. ’ 1619.” 12mo. pp. 96.

This was afterwards translated and published in English, under the following title: "A just and necessary Apology of certain Christians, no less contumeliously than commonly called 'Brownists' or 'Barrowists.' By Mr. John Robinson, Pastor of the English Church at Leyden. First published in Latin, in his and the church's name over which he was set; after, translated into English by himself; and now, republished for the special and common good of our own Countrymen. Psal. 41: 1. 'O blessed is he that prudently attendeth to the poor weakling,'—Printed in the year of our Lord 1625." 4to. pp. 72.

The same general characteristics in style, and spirit, and sentiment, which have already been remarked upon and exhibited in Mr. Robinson's other productions are found in this "Apology." To enable the reader to judge of the sentiments and style of the work a few extracts will be given.

VISIBLE CHURCH.—"There is then had the most full and perfect communion of the Body in the holy things of God, which is the next and immediate end of the 'visible church,' when all the Members thereof do convene in some one place.\* And if Nature, as philosophers teach, ever intend that which is most perfect, much more, Grace. Now that the Church, commonly called 'visible,' is then most truly visible indeed, when it is assembled in one place; and the communion thereof then most full and intire, when all its members, inspired, as it were, with the same presence of the Holy Ghost, do, from the same Pastor, receive the same provocations of Grace at the same time and in the same place;—when they all, by the same voice, 'banding, as it were, together,' do with one accord, pour out their prayers unto God;—when they all 'partici-

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\* Acts 2: 42. Heb. 10: 25.

pate' of one and the same holy bread ;\*—and, lastly, when they all together consent unanimously, either in the choice of the same officer, or censuring of the same offender ;—no man, admitting a due thought of things, can make doubt of ! . .

“ In huge and vast flocks, the governors cannot take knowledge of the manners of the people, private or public ; no, not so much as of their presence at or absence from the church assemblies : whereby, what damage cometh unto true piety, any man may easily conjecture, and miserable experience makes too, too manifest in the Reformed Churches. . .

“ There is, indeed, one church, and, as the apostle speaketh, ‘ one body,’ as ‘ one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one faith, one baptism ;’† that is, of one kind and nature ; not one in number, as one ocean. Neither was the church at Rome, in the apostle’s days, more one with the church of Corinth, than was the baptism of Peter one with Paul’s baptism, or than Peter and Paul were one. Neither was Peter or Paul more one whole, intire, and perfect man,—consisting of the parts essential and integral,—without relation unto other men, than is a particular congregation, rightly instituted and ordered, a whole, intire, and perfect Church, immediately, and *independently*, in respect of other churches, under Christ ! . .

“ Any citizen of Leyden may enjoy certain privileges in the city of Delph, by virtue of the politic combination of the United Provinces and cities, under the supreme heads thereof, the States General ; which he is bound also to help and assist with all his power, if necessity require ; but that the ordinary magistrate of Leyden should presume to execute his public office in the city of Delph, were an insolent and unheard-of usurpation. The very same, and not

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\* 1 Cor. 10: 17.

† Eph. 4: 4, 5.

otherwise, is to be said of Pastors, and particular churches, in respect of that spiritual combination mutual, under their chief and sole Lord, Jesus Christ."

CHURCH OFFICERS.—"Let us descend unto some such particulars as in which the Elders' office seemeth specially to consist. And they are, The admitting of Members into the church, upon profession of faith made ; and, The reprovng and censuring of obstinate offenders, whether sinning publicly, or privately with scandal. As we willingly leave the execution and administration of these things to the Elders alone, in the settled and well-ordered state of the church, so do we deny plainly that they are or can be rightly and orderly done but with the People's privity and consent ! . . If Baptism, the consequence of confession of faith in them baptized, and the badge of our consociation with Christ and his church, be to be celebrated publicly ; why is not the profession of faith proportionably,—although by the formerly baptized through a kind of unordered anticipation,—to be made publicly also, and therewithal the consociation ecclesiastical, as the former ? The covenant privately made, and the seal publicly annexed, are disproportionate."

THE CHURCH.—"The word 'Ecclesia,' church, originally Greek, answering to the Hebrew קָהָל 'Kahal,' doth primarily and properly signify a convention of citizens called from their houses by the public crier, either to hear some public sentence, or charge, given ; but translated to religious use, [it] denoteth an assembly of persons called out of the state of corrupt nature into that of supernatural grace, by the publishing of the Gospel. Now the Elders or Presbyters, as such, are, and so are said to be, *called*, to wit, *to* their office of Eldership, but *called out* they are not ; being themselves to *call out* the church, and unto it to perform the crier's office. Neither do I think that the

name 'Ecclesia,' church, hath been used, by any Greek author, before the apostles' times, or in their days, or in the age after them, for the assembly of *sole* governors in the act of their government, or indeed before the same governors had seized into their own and only hands the churches' both name and power."

ELDERS REPRESENTATIVES?—"But you will say, as learned men used to do, that these *Elders* sustain the person of the whole multitude, and supply their room, for the avoiding of confusion; and so are rightly, as commonly, called 'The church-representatives.'—I answer, first, No godly, no, nor reasonable man, will affirm, that this representation is to be extended to all the acts of religion, or indeed to others than these which are exercised in the governing of the church. What is it then? The Elders, in ruling and governing the church, must represent the People, and occupy their place. It should seem then, that it appertains unto the People,—unto the People primarily and originally, under Christ—to rule and govern the church, that is, themselves. But who will so say of a government not personal, but public, and instituted, as the church's is? If the Elders, in their consistory, represent the church, then whatsoever they either decree or do agreeing to the Word of God, whether respecting faith or manners, that also the church decreeth and doth though absent; . . this being the nature of representations, that what the representing doth, within the bounds of his commission, that the represented doth primarily, and much more as but using the other for his instrument: now, how dissonant this is to true faith and piety; how consonant unto the papists' implicit faith, no man can be ignorant; and I had rather wise men should consider, than I aggravate." . .

APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE.—"Surely, if ever it did or could

appertain to any church officers or governors whatsoever, to represent the church-assemblies, in elections, censures, and other ecclesiastical judgments and occurrences ; then, without doubt, unto the apostles in an eminent and peculiar manner, especially living in that rude and childish state of the church ; considering both how superlative their office was, and how admirable their gifts and endowments of the Holy Ghost, together with their incomparable both piety and prudence ; by which, they were both most able and willing to promote the Christian faith in holiness. And although this constant and uniform both practice and institution of the apostles unto divers *politic persons*, swelling with pride of fleshly reason, despising apostolical simplicity, and who, as Ireneus speaks, would be ‘ rectifiers of the apostles,’ seem worthy of light regard ; yet to us, who believe with Theodoret, that we ‘ ought to rest in the apostolical and prophetical demonstrations, and who, with Tertulian, ‘ do adore the fulness of the Scriptures,’ they seem of singular weight and moment.” . .

DEMOCRACY.—“ Lest any should take occasion, either by the things here spoken by us, or elsewhere of us, to conceive that we either exercise amongst ourselves, or would thrust upon others, any popular or democratical church-government ; may it please the Christian reader to make estimate of both our judgment and practice in this point according to these three declarations following : first, We believe that the external church-government, under Christ the only Mediator and Monarch thereof, is plainly aristocratical, and to be administered by some certain choice men ; although the state, which many unskilfully confound with the government, be, after a sort, popular and democratical. By this it appertains to the People freely to vote in elections, and judgments of the church ; in respect of the other, we

make account it behoves the Elders to govern the People, in their voting, in just liberty given by Christ whatsoever.\* Let the Elders publicly propound and order all things in the church, and so give their sentence on them: let them reprove them that sin, convince the gainsayers, comfort the repentant; and so administer all things according to the prescript of God's Word. Let the People, of faith, give their assent to their Elders' holy and lawful administration, that so the ecclesiastical elections and censures may be ratified, and put into solemn execution by the elders. . . Secondly, We doubt not but that the Elders both lawfully may, and necessarily ought, and that by virtue of their office, to meet apart, at times, from the Body of the church,† to deliberate of such things as concern her welfare, as for the preventing of things unnecessary, so for the preparing,—according to just order,—of things necessary, so as publicly and before the People, that they may be prosecuted with most conveniency. . . Thirdly, By the People, whose liberty and right in voting we thus avow and stand for in matters truly public and ecclesiastical, we do not understand,—as it hath pleased some contumeliously to upbraid us,—women and children; but only men, and them grown and of discretion: making account, that as children by their nonage, so women by their sex, are debarred of the use of authority in the church.”‡

MARRIAGE.—“Of the celebration of Marriage by the Pastors of the Church.”—Here, he says, “We cannot assent to the received opinion and practice answerable, in the Reformed Churches, by which the Pastors thereof do celebrate Marriage publicly, and by virtue of their office.”—

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\* 1 Cor. 12: 28. 1 Tim. 5: 17. Heb. 13: 17.

† Acts 20: 18.

‡ 1 Cor. 14: 34, 35. 1 Tim. 2: 12.

The Pastors' office, Robinson adds, ought not "to be stretched to any other acts than those of religion, and such as are peculiar to Christians, amongst which, Marriage common to the Gentiles as well as to them, hath no place." . .

PARABLE OF THE TARES.—Descending to particularize, Robinson follows out, at some considerable length, the allusion to "The church of Israel, and its condition compared with all the Christian churches;" and then he takes up "the parable of the tares,\* with which,"—he proceeds,— "as with some thunderbolt, men both learned and unlearned think us beaten all to *fritters* ! But, first, these words, 'Let both grow together till the harvest,'† from which alone they do dispute, Christ the Lord doth not expound nor meddle with in the opening of the parable ; from them, therefore, nothing firm can be concluded. Secondly, Christ himself interprets 'the field,' not the church, but 'the world ;'‡ as also, 'the harvest,' not 'the end' of the church, but of 'the world.'§ And if by the world, you understand the church, you must needs say, that Christ in the expounding of one parable used another. Thirdly, Both the text itself and reason of the thing do plainly teach, that He doth not speak at all of excommunication, which serves for the bettering of 'the tares ;' but of their final rooting up to perdition.|| Lastly, Admit Christ spake of men apparently wicked in the church, either not to be excommunicated in certain cases,—which, with Gellius Snecanus, I confidently deny, —or not excommunicated as they ought to be, and therefore to be borne of private members, the former of which is too ordinary, especially in churches enjoying peace and prosperity ; the latter of which, the church not being desperately bent on evil, I easily assent to, yet doth this place afford

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\* Matt. xiii. † Ver. 30. ‡ Ver. 38. § Ver. 39. || Verses 27—30.



no medicine for our grief: which ariseth not from any corrupt or negligent administration of the church's discipline, through the carelessness or want of wisdom,—it may be too much wisdom, such as it is,—of the administrators thereof, which are personal things; but from the very constitution of the church itself, and subject of ecclesiastical both government and power. Yea, I add unto all these things, that we, for our parts, are willing in the business and controversy in hand, to appeal unto the tribunal of this very parable; and that, expounded by our adversaries themselves; and do willingly condescend that by it alone judgment be given in this matter! Our Saviour Christ doth plainly teach that this 'field' was sown with 'good seed' alone; and that after, 'whilst men slept,' the enemy, the devil, came and 'sowed tares amongst the wheat.\*' But, on the contrary, in the sowing the English *field*, whether we respect the national or parochial churches, together with the wheat the tares, and that exceeding the other infinitely, were at first and yet are sown, and that of purpose, and under most severe penalties. And, hence, is the first and principal prejudice to our English *harvest*; and from which I conceive all the rest to come. For, unto this Church, thus clapped and clouted together of all persons of all sorts and spirits, without difference, no man, equally and prudently weighing things, can deny but that the pompous and imperious hierarchical government, together with all its accessories, doth right well accord."

CONCLUSION.—He writes, in conclusion, "And here thou hast, Christian Reader, the whole order of our conversation in the work of Christian religion set down both as briefly and plainly as I could. . . And if the things which we do, seem right in thine eyes, as to us certainly they do, I do

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\* Matt. 13: 24, 25.

earnestly and by the Lord Jesus admonish and exhort thy godly mind, that thou wilt neither withhold thy due obedience from his Truth, nor just succor from thy distressed brethren. Neither do thou endure, that either the smallness of the number, or meanness of the condition, of those that profess it, should prejudice, with thee, the profession of the Truth, but have in mind that of Tertullian, ‘Do we measure men’s Faith by their persons, or their persons by their Faith; as also, that of Austin, ‘Let matter weigh with matter, and cause with cause, and reason with reason; but especially that of the Apostle, ‘my brethren, have not the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons.’\*—But now, if it so come to pass, which God forbid, that the most being either forestalled by prejudice, or by prosperity made secure, there be few found, especially men of learning, who will so far vouchsafe to stoop as to look upon so despised creatures and their cause; this alone remaineth, That we turn our faces and mouths unto Thee, O most powerful Lord and gracious Father; humbly imploring help from God, towards those who are, by men, left desolate. There is with Thee no ‘respect of persons;’ neither are men less regards of Thee, if regards of Thee, for the world’s disregarding them. They who truly fear Thee, and work righteousness, although constrained to live, by leave, in a Foreign Land, exiled from country, spoiled of goods, destitute of friends, few in number and mean in condition, are, for all that, unto thee, O gracious God, nothing the less acceptable. Thou numberest all their wanderings, and puttest their tears into thy bottles: are they not written in thy Book? Towards Thee, O Lord, are our eyes; confirm our hearts, and bend thine ear,

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\* James 2: 1.

and suffer not our feet to slip, or our face to be ashamed, O thou both just and merciful God.—To Him, through Christ, be praise for ever in the church of Saints; and to thee, loving and Christian Reader, grace, peace, and eternal happiness, Amen.”\*

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\* In the “Appendix” to Mr. Perkins, Robinson defines a Church to be “A company of faithful and holy people, with their seed, called, by the Word of God, into public covenant with Christ, and amongst themselves for mutual fellowship in the use of all the means of God’s glory, and their salvation.” He shows “the necessity and sufficiency” of five offices of ministry, to arise from the condition, partly of the souls, and partly of the bodies of the Members: “1. In the soul is the faculty of understanding; about which, the ‘Teacher’ is to be exercised for information by doctrine.—2. The will and affections, upon which the ‘Pastor’ is especially to work by exhortation and comfort:—3. For that doctrine and exhortation without obedience are unprofitable, the diligence of the ‘Ruling Elder’ is requisite for that purpose.—4. And, as the Church consisteth of men, and they of souls and bodies, so are the ‘Deacons,’ out of the Church’s treasure and contribution, to provide for the common uses of the Church; relief of the poor, and maintenance of the officers:—5. As are the ‘Widows’ to afford unto the sick and impotent in body, not able otherwise to help themselves, their cheerful and comfortable service.”—If an Officer be found unfaithful, “He is, by the Church, to be warned to take heed to his ministry he hath received, to fulfil it, Col. 4: 17; which if he neglect to do, by the same power which set him up, he is to be put down and deposed.” Such as are out of office, we are told, are to feed the flock in the exercise of Prophecy; which, it is said, is proved “By examples in the Jewish church, where men, though in no office either in temple or synagogue, had liberty publicly to use their gifts, Luke 2: 42, 46, 47. 4: 16, 18. Acts 8: 4. 11: 19—21. 13: 14—16. 18: 24—26: by the commandments of Christ and his apostles, Luke 9: 1. 10: 1. Rom. 12: 9. 1 Pet. 4: 10, 11. 1 Cor. 14: 1: by the prohibiting of women, not extraordinarily inspired, to teach in the Church; herein liberty being given unto men, their husbands, or others, 1 Tim. 2: 11, 12. 1 Cor. 14: 34, 35: by the

In 1624, there appeared another volume, from the pen of Mr. Robinson, entitled, “A defence of the doctrine propounded by the Synod of Dort against John Munter and his associates, with the refutation of their answer to a writing touching Baptism.”

*Practical and Devotional Writings.*

The next volume which came from this laborious and devout man, was of a practical and devotional character. Its title reads thus: “*Essayes; or Observations Divine and Morall: Collected out of Holy Scriptures, ancient and moderne writers, both Divine and Humane. As also, out of the Great Volume of Men’s Manners: Tending to the furtherance of Knowledge and Virtue. By John Robinson.—The second Edition, with two Tables, The one of the Authors quoted; The other, of the Matters contained in the Observations—Prov. 9: 9, ‘Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be wiser, teach a Righteous man, and he will increase in learning.’—London, Printed by I. D. for I. Bellamie, at The Three Golden Lyons in Cornhill, neare the Royall Exchange. 1634. Small 12mo. pp. 566.*” The first

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excellent *ends* which, by this means, are to be obtained; as, The glory of God in the manifestation of his manifold graces—That the gifts of the Spirit in men be not quenched—For the fitting and trial of men for the Ministry—For the preserving pure of the doctrine of the Church, which is more endangered if some one or two alone may only be heard, and speak—For debating and satisfying of doubts, if any do arise—For the edifying of the Church, and conversion of others.” This exercise is to be performed “after the public ministry, by the Teachers, and under their direction and moderation; whose duty it is, if anything be obscure, to open it; if doubtful, to clear it; if unsound, to refuse it; if imperfect, to supply what is wanting, as they are able.” Printed separately in 1642, intituled “A Brief Catechism, etc.” 16mo. pp. 13.

edition bears date 1625, 4to. pp. 324. Some of the topics discussed in this volume are : " Of the Affections of the Minde." " Of Religion and the Differences and Disputations thereabout." Under which he bewails the evil tendency of Disputations about Religion, " drawing the best spirits into the head from the heart."—" Of Good Intentions."—" Of Labour and Idlenesse."—" Of Afflictions."—" Of Society and Friendship."—" Of Prayer."—" Of Death," etc. etc. There are sixty-two Essays or Observations in the volume. They all abound with pithy and pious sayings and observations, and breathe throughout a lovely spirit.\*

*His Posthumous Works.*

The title of Mr. Robinson's last work reads thus : " A Treatise, Of the Lawfulness of Hearing of the Ministers in the Church of England : Penned by that Learned and Reverend Divine, Mr. John Robinson, late Pastor to the English Church of God in Leyden. Printed according to the Copy that was found in his Study after his decease ; and now published for the common good. Together with a Letter ; written by the same author, and approved by his Church : which followeth after this Treatise.—John 7: 24. Printed Anno 1634." 16mo. Pref. pp. xviii. Treat. pp. 77.

There is one advantage of these interminable title pages : they answer as prefaces and introductions to the works to which they are appended. Accordingly, we may learn from the one before us, that this ' Treatise ' was a posthumous publication. The ' Letter ' was addressed to Mr.

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\* There is a neatly printed copy of this work, in a good state of preservation, in the Prince collection. It ought to be republished. It is a reproach to New England, that so little is known of the writings of John Robinson.

Jacob's Church in London, and belongs to a period of our history which has not yet been reviewed.

This 'Letter' bears date "5th April, 1624;" and the 'Treatise' was probably written some time during the same year. The great object of the Treatise is to show that, in cases of necessity, the Separatists might lawfully hear the ministers of the Church of England. The character and spirit of the work may be judged of, by the introductory and closing paragraphs, which I give.

INTRODUCTION.—Robinson opens his Treatise with lamentation; "accounting it a cross" that he is "in any particular compelled to dissent from" his "christian countrymen;" but confesses that he holds it a "benefit and matter of rejoicing," when he can, "in any thing, with good conscience, unite with them in matter, if not in manner; or, where it may be, in both." In "testimony of mine affection this way," he writes, "I have penned this Discourse, tending to prove 'The hearing of the Word of God, preached by the Ministers of the Church of England—able to open and apply the doctrines of Faith by that Church professed,—both lawful, and, in cases, necessary, for all of all sects or sorts of Christians, having opportunity and occasion of so doing; though sequestering themselves from all communion with the Hierarchial Order there established.'"

He then proceeds, after some preliminary matter, to the following statement, and to answer objections to the doctrine advanced.

HEARING, NOT COMMUNING.—"Now, for Preaching by some, and Hearing by others,—which two always go together,—they may be, and oft are, performed without any religious and spiritual communion at all passing between the persons preaching and hearing. . . Hearing simply, is not appointed of God to be a mark and note either of union in the same

faith or order amongst all that hear ; or, of difference of Christians from no Christians ; or of members from no members of the church ; as the sacraments are notes of both, in the participants : the hearing of the Word of God is not so enclosed by any hedge or ditch, Divine or human, made about it ; but lies in common for all, for the good of all.—The particular objections follow.”

Sixteen objections are then stated and answered. He then concludes in the following catholic and Christian language :

CONCLUSION.—“ To conclude. For myself, thus I believe with my heart before God ; and profess with my tongue, and have, before the world ; That I have one and the same Faith, Hope, Spirit, Baptism, and Lord, which I had in the Church of England, and none other. That, I esteem so many in that Church, of what state or order soever, as are truly partakers of that Faith,—as I account many thousands to be,—for my Christian brethren ; and myself a fellow-member with them, of that mystical Body of Christ scattered far and wide throughout the world. That, I have always, in spirit and affection, all Christian fellowship and communion with them ; and am most ready, in all outward actions and exercises of religion, lawful, and lawfully done, to express the same. And withal, That I am persuaded the Hearing of the Word of God there preached, in the manner and upon the grounds formerly mentioned, is both lawful and, upon just occasion, necessary for me and all true Christians withdrawing from that Hierarchial Order of church-government and ministry, and the appurtenances thereof ; and uniting in the Order and Ordinances instituted by Christ, the only King and Lord of His church, and by all his disciples to be observed. And, lastly, That, I cannot communicate with, or submit unto, the said Church-order and ordi-

nances there established, either in state or act, without being condemned of my own heart ; and, therein, provoking God, who is greater than my heart, to condemn me much more. And, for my failings,—which may easily be too many one way or other,—of ignorance herein ; and so for all my other sins, I most humbly crave pardon first and most at the hands of God ; and so of all men whom therein I offend, or have offended, any manner of way ; even as they desire and look that God should pardon their offences.”

I have now mentioned all the published works, of any magnitude, which I have discovered of this most estimable man. And he who considers the peculiar situation of Mr. Robinson during the time that all these works were written, and the many and urgent duties growing out of his pastoral relation to his large church, will, I am sure, agree with me in saying, John Robinson must have been a most remarkable man : a man of extraordinary talents, and learning, and acquisitions, and industry, and temper ; to have written so much and so well, amidst so many inconveniences, and discouragements, and disturbing influences. He *was* a most extraordinary man. The very enemies of the cause for which he spent his life acknowledge this : they confess him to have been “ a man of excellent parts, and the most learned, polished, and modest spirit as ever separated from the Church of England.”\*

I have been thus particular in my account of Mr. Robinson, because he is the reputed father of the Independents or Congregationalists as they now exist. Though he never claimed this honor himself, and probably would never have allowed any one to ascribe it to him ; and though, so far as the principles of our denomination are concerned, Mr. Robinson was by no means the first discoverer—yet, he doubt-

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\* Baylie, in Prince, Part II. p. 173.



less did more to perfect the system of Congregationalism in its detail, than any one man who has lived since the days of the apostles. It now exists, in all essential particulars, as it was found in the Leyden church during the last years of their residence in Holland. I speak of *their last years*; for it must not be overlooked, that during the residence of this church in Leyden, some modifications were introduced into their practice, if not into their doctrines. When they left England, Mr. Robinson and his church were rigid Separatists; regarding the Church of England as essentially anti-christian in its organization and government, they not only withdrew from it, but utterly rejected it, and denounced it; and would not so much as hear the ministers of that church. We have seen from Mr. Robinson's writings—his last work particularly—that, in this respect his views had materially changed. I do not discover, however, any such considerable change, in his opinions generally, as some writers have intimated. He appears to have retained to the last, the conviction that the Church of England was anti-christian in its organization, government, and discipline; and though he would receive such members of it as were counted pious, to occasional communion, yet he seems never to have thought it right for himself or his brethren to commune with that church; or to do anything which might fairly be construed as an admission that the English Hierarchy was a Christian church—i. e. was organized upon the principles of the Gospel.

The Congregational doctrine,—that the advice of sister churches should be sought, in cases of difficulty,—seems gradually to have developed itself during the period now under review. Robert Browne, indeed, advocated this doctrine; but there was no opportunity for its practical development until after the removal of the North-of-England

church to Leyden. The difficulty which sprang up about that time between Ainsworth and Johnson, respecting the power of the Elders, occasioned an application to the Leyden church for counsel; this they most cheerfully gave; and readily interposed their kind offices to bring about a reconciliation between these two excellent men and their respective friends. Another instance has been already alluded to, when the London church sent to the churches at Amsterdam and Leyden for advice. It is proper to remark here, that Mr. Robinson was of opinion, that the *body* of a church should not be sent to for advice, etc.—“but some chief persons” in it. His words are: “He conceives it not orderly that the *Bodies of Churches* should be sent to for counsel; but some chief persons. Power and authority is in the Body for elections and censures; but counsel for direction in all difficult cases, in some Few. In which regard every ‘particular church’ has appointed its Elderships for ordinary counsellors; to direct it and the members thereof, in all difficulties; with whom others are also to advise upon occasion; ‘specially, ordinary. ‘The Priest’s lips should preserve knowledge, and they should ask the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. Mal. 2: 7.’” \*

These sentiments of Robinson are carried out in the present practice of our churches in sending their pastor and a lay-brother to assist in counselling a sister church. The early Congregationalists of New England maintained, that the sending of delegates from an invited church to sit in council, did not exclude the brethren of that church from attending the same council, if they chose so to do.† This liberty, however consistent with Congregational principles, is rarely if ever used by our churches.

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\* Letter to the Lond. Chh. Hanbury, p. 448.

† See Cambridge Platform, Chap. xvi. § 6.

*The Leyden Church.*

In describing John Robinson, I give the essential peculiarities of his church, so far as doctrine and practice are concerned; for the most perfect harmony of views subsisted between them. And what is still more interesting, this mild and devout man left the impress of his *moral* character upon his beloved congregation. The Leyden church and their pastor were most firmly knit together in Christian love, as well as ecclesiastical sentiment. The pastor loved his church with the sincerest affection; and the church, in turn, loved and revered their amiable, learned, wise, and pious pastor, with the deepest devotion. "Such was the reciprocal love and respect between him and his flock, that it might be said of them as it was said of the emperor Marcus Aurelius and the people of Rome, that it was hard to judge, whether he delighted more in having such a people, or they in having such a pastor."\*

As this church was the reservoir through which Congregationalism has chiefly flowed, by two diverging streams, to the old and new world, it may be acceptable to my readers to have presented in a connected and condensed form the leading principles and doctrines of the Leyden church.

I. *In general.*—They believed the inspired Scriptures to be the only rule of faith and worship;—and that every man had the right to judge for himself what the Scriptures taught, and to worship God agreeably to his convictions of truth and duty.

II. *In their doctrinal creed.*—They were strictly Calvinistic; agreeing substantially with the church of England, and all the Reformed churches of that period.

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\* Quoted by Belknap, Am. Biog. Art. Robinson.

III. *In ecclesiastical matters.* — They believed “That no church ought to consist of more members than can conveniently watch over one another, and usually meet and worship in one congregation.”—That visible believers only should compose a church.—That such persons are to be embodied into a church “by some certain contract or covenant.”—“That being embodied they have a right of choosing all their officers.”—That these are, “in some respects, of *three sorts*, in others *but two*, viz. (1.) *Pastors or Teaching-Elders*, who have the power of overseeing, teaching, administering the sacraments, and ruling too; and (2.) “*Mere Ruling Elders*, who are to help the pastors in overseeing and ruling.” \* \* —“That the elders of both sorts form the Presbytery of overseers and rulers, which should be in every particular church.” \* \* 3. “*Deacons*, who are to take care of the poor, and of the church’s treasure.”—That these officers being chosen and ordained, have no lordly, arbitrary, or imposing power; but can only rule and minister with the consent of the brethren; who ought not in contempt to be called the *laity*, but to be treated as men and brethren in Christ, not as slaves or minors.”—“That no churches or church officers, whatever, have any power over any other church or officers, to control or impose upon them; but are all equal in their rights and privileges, and ought to be independent in the exercise and enjoyment of them.”

IV. *As to the sacraments and church administrations.*—“They held that Baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace, and should be dispensed only to visible believers, with their unadult children.” \* \* —“That the Lord’s supper should be received as it was at first, even in Christ’s immediate presence, in the table posture.”—“That no set forms of prayer should be imposed.”—“That excommunication

should be wholly spiritual, a mere rejecting the scandalous from the communion of the church in the holy sacraments, and those other spiritual privileges which are peculiar to the faithful.”—“ They were very strict for the observation of the Lord’s day ; \* \* as also solemn fastings and thanksgivings, as the state of Providence requires ; but all other times, not prescribed in Scripture, they utterly relinquished.”—Finally. They utterly rejected and repudiated the authority of man to invent or impose any religious rites, ceremonies, or observances, upon the churches of Christ.\*

Such were the principles and doctrines of John Robinson and his excellent church. For the maintenance of these sentiments they were hunted down like wild beasts, and “ *hurried* ” out of the kingdom ; not being allowed even the poor privilege of exiling themselves for Christ’s sake, until persecution, and insult, and imprisonment had been heaped upon them. But that God who “ seeth not as man seeth,” saw the end from the beginning ; and was wisely ordering these very things so as to accomplish his own glorious purposes. He who hath “ his way in the whirlwind and in the storm ” was directing the tempest of hierarchal wrath, so as to make it glorify Him.

By all these trials, God was purifying this poor church, and rendering it more fit for the Master’s use. When he had winnowed his wheat ; when he had refined his gold ; when he had fitted his people for the work which he had assigned them ;—then he put it into their hearts to seek a new world ; where in a soil more friendly, and under a sky more propitious, they might plant and cherish the pure, simple, and scriptural principles of Congregational belief.

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\* I have chiefly followed the almost faultless Prince, in the above summary.—New Eng. Chron. Part II. Sec. 1.

## APPENDIX.

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### No. I.

“ A TRUE DESCRIPTION, OUT OF THE WORD OF GOD, OF THE  
VISIBLE CHURCH.”—1589.

Written, probably, by Clyfton or Smyth, the predecessors of John Robinson in the church which finally emigrated to New England. The Description runs thus :

“ As there is but ONE GOD and FATHER of all, one LORD over all, and one SPIRIT ; so is there but one Truth, one Faith, one Salvation, one CHURCH,—called in one Hope, joined in one Profession, guided by one Rule—even the Word of the MOST HIGH.\*

“ This CHURCH, as it is universally understood, containeth in it all the Elect of God that have been, are, or shall be : but being considered more particularly, as it is seen in this present world, it consisteth of a Company and Fellowship of faithful and holy people gathered in the Name of Christ Jesus their only King, Priest, and Prophet ; worshipping Him aright, being peaceably and quietly governed by his Officers and Laws ; keeping the unity of Faith in the bond of peace, and love unfeigned.†

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\* Gen. i. 1 ; Exod. xx. 3 ; 1 Tim. ii. 4 ; Phil. i. 27 ; Eph. ii. 18 ; John viii. 41 ; Deut. vi. 25 ; Rom. x. 8 ; 2 Tim. iii. 15 ; John viii. 51 ; 1 John ii. 3, etc.

† Gen. xvii. ; 1 Pet. i. 2 ; Rev. vii. 9 ; 1 Cor. x. 3 ; John xvii. 10, 20. Psal. cxi. 1 ; cxlix. 1 ; Isa. lxii. 12 ; Eph. i. 1 ; 1 Cor. i. 2 ; Deut. xiv. 2. Deut. xii. 5 ; John vi. 37 ; iii. 14 ; xii. 32 ; Luke xvii. 37 ; Gen. xlv. [ xlix ] 10 ; Psalm xlv. 6 ; Zech. ix. 9 ; Heb. i. 8 ; Rom. viii. 34 ; John xvii. ; Heb. v. 9 ; viii. 1 ; iv. 14 ; Deut. xviii. 15 ; Matt. xvii. 5 ; Heb. i. 2 ; Gen. xiv. 18 ; Exod. xx. 4—8 ; Lev. x. 5 ; John iv. 23 ; Matt. xi. 29 ; 1 Cor. xi. 16 ; Mar. xiii. 34. Rev. xxii. 9 ; Eph. iv. 3 ; 1 Cor. i. 13 ; Mark ix. 50 ; John xiii. 34 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 4 ; 1 Pet. i. 22 ; 1 John iii. 18.

“ Most joyful, excellent, and glorious things, are everywhere in the Scriptures spoken of this CHURCH. It is called the city, house, temple, and mountain of the Eternal God ; the chosen generation, the holy nation, the peculiar people, the vineyard, the garden enclosed, the spring shut up, the sealed fountain, the orchard of pomegranates with sweet fruits, the heritage, the Kingdom of Christ ; yea, his sister, his love, his spouse, his queen, and his body ; the joy of the whole earth. To this Society are the covenant and all the promises made, of peace, of love, and of salvation ; of the presence of God ; of his graces, of his power, and of his protection.\*

“ And, surely, if this CHURCH be considered in her parts, she shall appear most beautiful ; yea, most wonderful, and even ravishing the senses to conceive, much more to behold ; what then to enjoy so blessed communion ! For behold, her King and Lord is the King of peace, and Lord himself of all glory. She enjoyeth most holy and heavenly Laws ; most faithful and vigilant Pastors ; most sincere and pure Teachers ; most careful and upright Governors ; most diligent and trusty Deacons ; most loving and sober Relievers ; and a most humble, meek, obedient, faithful, and loving People : every Stone living, elect, and precious ; every Stone hath his beauty, his burden, and his order : all bound to edify one another, exhort, reprove, and comfort one another ; lovingly as to their own members, faithfully as in the eyes of God.†

“ No Office, here, is ambitiously affected ; no Law wrongfully wrested, or wilfully neglected ; no Truth hid,

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\* Psal. lxxxvii ; *ibid.* ; 1 Tim. iii. 15 ; Heb. iii. 6. 1 Cor. iii. 17. Isa. ii. 2 ; Mic. iv. 1 ; Zech. viii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Isa. v. 1 ; xxvii. 2 ; Sol. Song. iv. 12 ; Isa. li. 3. Isa. xix. 25. Mic. v. 2 ; Matt. iii. 2 ; John iii. 5. Sol. Song. v. 2. Psal. xlv. 9. 1 Cor. xii. 27 ; Eph. i. 2, 3. Gal. iv. 28 ; Rom. ix. 4. Psal. cxlvii. 14 ; 2 Thess. iii. 16. Isa. xlvi. 13 ; Zech. xiv. 17. Isa. lx ; Ezek. xlvii ; Zech. iv. 12. Ezek. xlviii. 35 ; Matt. xxviii. 20 ; Isa. lxii.

† Sol. Song. vi. 4, 9. Isa. lxii. 11 ; John xii. 15 ; Heb. ii. 7, 8. Matt. xi. 30 ; 1 John v. 3. Eph. iv. 11 ; Acts xx. Rom. xii. 7. 1 Cor. xii. 28 ; Rom. xii. 8. Acts vi. Rom. xii. 8. Matt. v. 5 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 38 ; Isa. lx. 8 ; Deut. xviii. 9—13. 1 Pet. ii. 5 ; 1 Kings vii. 9 ; Zech. xiv. 21. Gal. vi. 2. 1 Cor. xii. Rom. xii. 3. &c. Heb. x. 24. Lev. xix. 17 ; 1 Thess. iv. 9. Col. iii. 23 ; 1 John iii. 20.

or perverted : every one, here, hath freedom and power—not disturbing the peaceable order of the Church—to utter his complaints and griefs, and freely to reprove the transgression and errours of any, without exception of persons.\*

“ Here, is no intrusion, or climbing up another way into the Sheepfold, than by the holy and free election of the Lord’s holy and free People ; and that, according to the Lord’s Ordinance ; humbling themselves by fasting and prayer before the Lord ; craving the direction of his Holy Spirit, for the trial and approving of gifts, etc.†

“ Thus, they orderly proceed to Ordination, by fasting and prayer ; in which action the Apostles used laying on of hands. Thus, hath every one of the People interest in the election and ordination of their Officers ; as also, in the administration of Offices, upon the transgression, offence, abuse, etc. ; having an especial care unto the inviolable order of the Church, as is aforesaid.‡

“ Likewise, in this CHURCH, they have holy Laws, as limits and bonds, which it is lawful at no hand to transgress : they have laws to direct them in the choice of every Officer, what kind of men the Lord will have. Their Pastor must be apt to teach ; no young scholar ; able to divide the Word aright ; holding fast that faithful Word, according to doctrine, that he may be able also to exhort, rebuke, improve, with wholesome doctrine, and to convince them that say against it. He must be a man that loveth goodness : he must be wise, righteous, holy, temperate ; he must be of life unreprouable, as God’s Steward ; he must be generally well reported of, and one that ruleth his own household under obedience with all honesty ; he must be modest, humble, meek, gentle, and loving ; he must be a man of great patience, compassion, labour, and diligence ; he must always be careful and watchful over the Flock whereof the Lord hath made him Overseer, with all willingness and cheerfulness ; not holding his office in respect of

\* 2 Cor. ii. 17 ; 3 John 9. 1 Tim. iv. 2, 3 ; v. 21 ; vi. 14. Gal. vi. 12. 1 Cor. v. Jer. xxiii. 28 ; 1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Cor. vi. xiv. 30 ; Col. iv. 17.

† John x. 1. Acts i. 23 ; vi. 3 ; xiv. 23.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 14 ; v. 22. Luke xvii. 3. Rom. xvi. 17 ; Col. iv. 17.



persons, but doing his duty to every soul, as he will answer before the Chief Shepherd.\*

“ Their Doctor or Teacher must be a man apt to teach ; able to divide the Word of God aright, and to deliver sound and wholesome doctrine from the same ; still building upon that sound ground-work, he must be mighty in the Scriptures, able to convince the gainsayers, and careful to deliver his doctrine pure, sound, and plain, not with curiosity or affectation, but so that it may edify the most simple, approving it to every man’s conscience : he must be of life unreprouable, one that can govern his own household ; he must be of manners sober, temperate, modest, gentle, and loving.†

“ Their Elders must be of wisdom and judgment ; endowed with the Spirit of God ; able to discern between cause and cause, between plea and plea ; and accordingly, to prevent and redress evils : always vigilant and [super]-intending, to see the statutes, ordinances, and laws of God, kept in the church ; and that, not only by the People in obedience ; but, to see the Officers do their duties. These men must be of life likewise, unreprouable, governing their own families orderly ; they must be also, of manners sober, gentle, modest, loving, temperate, etc.‡

“ Their Deacons must be men of honest report, having the mystery of the Faith in a pure conscience ; endowed with the Holy Ghost : they must be grave, temperate ; not given to excess, nor to filthy lucre.§

“ Their Relievers, or Widows, must be women of sixty years of age at the least, for avoiding of inconveniences : they must be well reported of for good works ; such as have nourished their children ; such as have been harbourers to strangers ; diligent and serviceable to the saints,—compassionate and helpful to them in adversity ; given to

\* Matt. v. 19 ; 1 Tim. i. 18. Deut. xxiii. 10 ; Mal. ii. 7 ; 1 Tim. iii. 1, etc. 2 Tim. ii. 15. Tit. i. 9 ; 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. i. 7, 8. Num. xii. 3, 7 ; Isa. l. 4—6 ; Jer. iii. 15 ; Ezek. xxxiv. 18 ; Acts xx ; 1 Pet. v. 1—4 ; 1 Tim. v. 21.

† 1 Tim. iii. ; Tit. i. ; 2 Tim. ii. 15 ; 1 Cor. i. 17 ; ii. 4.

‡ Num. xi. 24, 25 ; 2 Chron. xix. 8 ; Acts xv ; 1 Tim. iii ; v.

§ Acts vi. 3 ; 1 Tim. iii. 8, 9.

every good work, continuing in supplications and prayers night and day.\*

“These Officers must first be duly proved; then, if they be found ‘blameless,’ administer, etc.†

“Now, as the persons, gifts, conditions, manners, life, and proof of these officers, are set down by the Holy Ghost; so are their Offices limited, severed, and divers.‡

“The Pastor’s Office is to feed the Sheep of Christ in green and wholesome pastures of his Word, and lead them to the still waters, even to the pure fountain and river of life. He must guide and keep those sheep by that Heavenly Sheephook and pastoral staff of the Word; thereby, drawing them to him; thereby, looking into their souls, even unto their most secret thoughts; thereby, discerning their diseases; and thereby, curing them: applying to every disease a fit and convenient medicine; and, according to the quality and danger of the disease, give warning to the Church that they may orderly proceed to Excommunication: further, he must by this his Sheephook, watch over and defend his Flock from ravenous beasts, and the ‘Wolf,’ and take the ‘little Foxes,’ etc.§

“The Doctor’s Office is already set down, in his description: his special care must be to build upon the only true ground-work, gold, silver, and precious stones, that his work may endure the trial of the fire; and, by the light of the same fire, reveal the timber, hay, and stubble of false Teachers. He must take diligent heed to keep the Church from errors; and further, he must deliver his doctrine so plainly, simply, and purely, that the Church may increase with the increase of God, and grow up unto Him which is the HEAD, Jesus Christ.||

“The Office of the Ancients is expressed in their description: their especial care must be to see the ordinances

\* 1 Tim. v. 9, 10. † 1 Tim. iii. 10. ‡ Cor. xii. 12, 18, 28.

§ Psal. xxiii; Lev. x. 10, 11; Num. xviii. 1; Ezek. xlii. 23; xxxiii; xxxiv; John xxi. 15; Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. v. 1—4; Zech. xi. 7; Rev. xxii. 2; Luke xii. 42; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5; Heb. iv. 12; John x. 11, 12; Sol. Song. ii. 15.

|| 1 Cor. iii. 11, 12; Lev. x. 10; Ezek. xxxiii. 1, 2, etc.; xlii. 24; Mal. ii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 11; 1 Cor. i. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 16; vi. 20; Eph. ii. 20; Heb. vi. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 2.

of God truly taught and practised, as well by the Officers in doing their duty uprightly, as to see that the People obey willingly and readily. It is their duty to see the Congregation holily and quietly ordered, and no way disturbed by the contentious and disobedient, froward, and obstinate; not taking away the liberty of the least, but upholding the right of all, wisely judging of times and [other] circumstances. They must be ready Assistants to the Pastor and Teachers; helping to bear their burden, but not intruding into their Office.\*

“The Deacon’s Office is faithfully to gather and collect, by the ordinance of the Church, the goods and benevolence of the Faithful; and by the same direction, diligently and trustily to distribute them, according to the necessity of the Saints. Further, they must inquire and consider of the proportion of the wants, both of the Officers and the poor, and accordingly relate unto the Church, that provision may be made.†

“The Reliever’s and Widow’s Office is to minister to the sick, lame, weary, and diseased, such helpful comforts as they need, by watching, tending, and helping them. Further, they must show good example to the younger women, in sober, modest, and godly conversation; avoiding idleness, vain talk, and light behaviour.‡

“These Officers, though they be divers and several, yet are they not severed, lest there should be a division in the Body; but they are as members of the Body, having the same care one of another; jointly doing their several duties to the service of the Saints, and to the edification of the Body of Christ, till all meet together in the perfect measure of the fulness of Christ; by whom, all the Body being, in the meanwhile, thus coupled and knit together by every joint for the furniture thereof, according to the effectual power which is in the measure of every part, receiveth increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love: nei-

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\* Num. xi. 16; Deut. i. 13; xvi. 18; 2 Chron. xix. 8; Exod. xxxix. 42; 1 Tim. iii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 13; 1 Cor. xi. 16; xiv. 33; Gal. ii. 4, 5, 14; Col. iv. 16, 17; Acts xx; 1 Pet. v. 1; Rom. xii. 8.

† Acts vi.; Rom. xii. 8.

‡ Rom. xii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 9, etc.

ther can any of these Offices be wanting, without grievous lameness, and apparent deformity of the Body, yea, violent injury to the HEAD, Christ Jesus.\*

"Thus this holy army of Saints is marshalled here in earth, by these Officers, under the conduct of their Glorious Emperor, Christ; that victorious Michael: thus it marcheth, in this most heavenly order and gracious array, against all Enemies, both bodily and ghostly; peaceable, in itself, as Jerusalem; terrible to the Enemy as an army with banners, triumphing over their tyranny with patience, their cruelty with meekness, and over Death itself with dying. Thus, through the blood of that spotless Lamb, and that Word of their testimony, they are more than conquerors; bruising the head of the Serpent: yea, through the power of His Word, they have power to cast down Satan like lightning; to tread upon serpents and scorpions; to cast down strong holds, and everything that exalteth itself against God: the gates of Hell, and all the Principalities and Powers of the World, shall not prevail against it.†

"Further: He hath given them the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, that whatsoever they bind in Earth, by his Word, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever they loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.‡

"Now this Power which Christ hath given unto his Church, and to every Member of his Church, to keep it in order, he hath not left it to their discretion and lusts to be used or neglected as they will; but in his Last Will and Testament, he hath set down both an order of proceeding and an end to which it is used.§

"If the Fault be private, holy and loving admonition and reproof are to be used, with an inward desire and earnest care to win their Brother; but if he will not hear, yet to take two or three other Brethren with him, whom he know-

\* Luke ix. 46, 47; John xiii. 12—17; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 25, 28; Eph. iv. 11—13, 16.

† Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.; Rev. xiv. 1, 2; Sol. Song vi 3; Rev. xii. 11; Luke x. 18, 19; 2 Cor. x. 5; Matt. xvi. 18; Rom. viii. 38, 39.

‡ Matt. xvi. 19; John xx. 23; Matt. xviii. 18.

§ Matt. xvi. 16, 19; xviii. 15—18; xxviii. 20; Deut. xii. 31, 32; Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

eth most meet for that purpose, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be confirmed : and if he refuse to hear them, then, to declare the matter to the Church ; which ought severely and sharply to reprehend, and gravely to admonish, and lovingly to persuade the party offending ; showing him the heinousness of his offence, and the danger of his obstinacy, and the fearful judgments of the Lord.\*

“ All this, notwithstanding, the Church is not to hold him as an enemy, but to admonish him, and pray for him as a Brother ; proving if, at any time, the Lord will give him repentance : for this power is not given them to the destruction of any, but to the edification of all.†

“ If this prevail not to draw him to repentance, then are they, in the Name and power of the Lord Jesus, with the whole Congregation, reverently, in prayer, to proceed to Excommunication : that is, unto the casting him out of their congregation and fellowship, covenant and protection of the Lord, for his disobedience and obstinacy ; and, committing him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, if such be His good will and pleasure.‡

“ Further : they are to warn the whole Congregation and all other Faithful, to hold him as a heathen and publican, and to abstain themselves from his society, as not to eat or drink with him, etc. ; unless it be such as of necessity must needs, as his wife, his children, and family ; yet these, if they be Members of the Church, are not to join to him in any spiritual exercise.§

“ If the Offence be Public, the party is publicly to be re-proved and admonished : if he then repent not, to proceed to Excommunication, as aforesaid.||

“ The Repentance of the party must be proportionate to the Offence ; namely, if the Offence be public, public ; if

\* Lev. xix. 17, 18 ; Matt. xviii. 15 ; Deut. xix. 15 ; Matt. xviii. 16.

† 2 Thes. iii. 15 ; 2 Cor. x. 8 ; xiii. 10.

‡ Matt. xviii. 17 ; 1 Cor. v. 11.

§ Matt. xviii. 17 ; 1 Cor. v. 11.

|| 1 Tim. v. 20 ; Gal. ii. 14 ; Josh. vii. 19 ; 2 Cor. vii. 9.

private, private : humbled, submissive, sorrowful, unfeigned, giving glory to the Lord.\*

“There must great care be had of Admonitions ; that they be not captious, or curious, finding fault where none is, neither yet in bitterness or reproach ; for that were to destroy and not to save our Brother : but they must be carefully done, with prayer going before ; they must be seasoned with truth, gravity, love, and peace.†

“Moreover, in this CHURCH is an especial care had, by every Member thereof, of Offences. The strong ought not to offend the weak, nor the weak to judge the strong ; but all graces, here, are given to the service and edification of each other in love and long-suffering.‡

“In this CHURCH is the Truth purely taught, and surely kept : here are the Covenant, the Sacraments, and Promises ; the Graces, the Glory, the Presence, the Worship of God, etc.§

“Into this Temple entereth no unclean thing, neither whatsoever worketh abominations or lies ; but they which are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.|| But ‘without’ this CHURCH shall be dogs, and enchanters, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whatsoever loveth and maketh lies.”¶—1589.\*\*

\* Lev. xix. 17, 18 ; Prov. x. 12 ; Rom. xii. 19 ; xiii. 10 ; xiv. 1.

† Matt. xviii. 15 ; xxvi. 8 ; Gal. vi. 1, 2 ; 2 Tim. ii. 24 ; Mark ix. 50 ; Eph. iv. 29 ; Jas. v. 15, 19, 20.

‡ Luke xvii. 1 ; Prov. x. 12 ; Rom. xiv. 13, 19 ; Gal. vi. 2.

§ Gen. xvii. ; Lev. xxvi. 11, 12 ; Isa. xlv. 3 ; Gal. iv. 28 ; vi. 16 ; Isai. lx. 15 ; Deut. iv. 12, 13 ; Isai. lvi. 7 ; 1 Tim. iii. 15 ; Isai. lii. 8.

|| Isai. lii. 1 ; Ezek. xlv. 9 ; Isai. xxxv. 8 ; Zech. xiv. 21 ; Rev. xxi. 27.

¶ Rom. ii. 9 ; Rev. xxii. 15.

\*\* Hanbury, Vol. 1. pp. 28—34.

## No. II.

REV. JOHN ROBINSON'S ANSWER TO JOSEPH HALL, SHOWING  
THE GROUNDS ON WHICH THE SEPARATION WAS MADE  
FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

“PREAMBLE.—It is a hard thing even for sober-minded men, in cases of controversy, to use, soberly, the advantages of the times; upon which, whilst men are mounted on high, they use to behold such as they oppose too overly, and not without contempt; and so are oftentimes emboldened to roll upon them, as from aloft, very weak and weightless discourses: thinking any slight and slender opposition sufficient to oppress those underlings whom they have, as they suppose, at so great an advantage. Upon this very presumption, it cometh to pass, that this Author undertaketh thus solemnly and severely to censure a cause whereof, as appeareth in the sequel of the discourse, he is utterly ignorant: which, had he been but half so careful to have understood as he hath been forward to censure, he would either have been, I doubt not, more equal towards it, or more weighty against it. As this Epistle is come to my hands, so I wish the Answer of it may come to the hands of him that occasioned it. Entreating the Christian Reader, in the Name of the Lord, unpartially to behold, without either prejudice of cause or respect of person, what is written on both sides; and from the Court of a sound Conscience, to give just judgment.

“AN ANSWER, ETC.—THE ‘Crime’ here objected, is ‘Separation:’ a thing very odious in the eyes of all them from whom it is made; as evermore casting upon them the imputation of evil, whereof all men are impatient. And hence it cometh to pass that the Church of England can better brook the vilest persons’ continuing communion with it, than any whomsoever separating from it, though upon never so just and well-grounded reasons. And yet separation from the world, and so from the men of the world, and so from the Prince of the world that reigneth in them, and so from whatsoever is contrary to God, is the first step to our communion with God and angels and good men, as the first step to a ladder is to leave the earth!

“The ‘Separation’ we have made, in respect of our knowledge and obedience, is indeed ‘late’ and new; yet is it, in the nature and causes thereof, as ancient as the Gospel, which was first founded in the ‘enmity’\* which God himself put betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; which ‘enmity’ hath not only been successively continued, but also visibly manifested by the actual ‘Separation’ of all true Churches from the world, in their collection and constitution, before the Law, under the Law, and under the Gospel.† Which Separation the Church of England neither hath made nor doth make, but stands actually one with all that part of the world within the Kingdom, without separation: for which cause, amongst others, we have chosen, by the grace of God, rather to separate ourselves to the Lord from it, than with it from Him: in the visible constitution of it.

“To the title of ‘Ringleader,’ wherewith it pleaseth this ‘Pistler to style me, I answer, That if the thing I have be good, it is good and commendable to have been forward in it; if it be evil, let it be reproved by the light of God’s Word; and that God to whom I have done that I have done, will, I doubt not, give me both to see and to heal my error, by speedy repentance: if I have fled away on foot, I shall return on horseback. But as I durst never set foot into this way, but upon a most sound and irresistible conviction of conscience by the Word of God, as I was persuaded, so must my retiring be wrought by more solid reasons, from the same Word, than are to be found in a thousand such pretty pamphlets and formal flourishes as this is.

“Your pitying of us, and sorrowing for us, especially for the wrong done by us, were, in you, commendable affections; if by us justly occasioned; but if your Church be deeply drenched in Apostacy, and you cry ‘peace, peace,’ when sudden and certain desolation is at hand, it is you that do the wrong, though you make the complaint. And so, being cruel towards yourselves, and your own whom you flatter, you cannot be truly pitiful towards others whom

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\* Gen. iii. 15.

† Gen. iv. 13, 14, 16. vi. 1, 2. vii. 1, with 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. Gen. xii. 2. Lev. xx. 24, 26. Neh. ix. 2. John xvii. 14, 16. Acts ii. 40. xix. 9. 1 Cor. vi. 17.



you bewail. But I will not discourage you in this affection, lest we find few in the same fault: the most, instead of 'pity' and compassion, affording nothing but fury and indignation.

"The first action laid against us is of 'unnaturalness,' and ingratitude, towards our 'Mother,' the Church of England, for our *causeless* 'Separation' from her. To which unjust accusation, and trivial querimony, our most just defence hath been, and is, That to our knowledge, we have done her no wrong. We do freely, and with all thankfulness, acknowledge every good thing she hath, and which ourselves have there received. The superabundant grace of God covering and passing by, the manifold enormities in that Church, wherewith these good things are inseparably commingled; and wherein we also, through ignorance and infirmity, were inwrapped. But what then? Should we still have continued in sin, that grace might have abounded? If God have caused a further truth, like a light in a dark place, to shine in our hearts, should we still have mingled that light with darkness, contrary to the Lord's own practice, Gen. 1: 4; and, express precept, 2 Cor. 6: 14?

"But, the Church of England, say you, is our 'Mother,' and so ought not to be avoided. But, say I, we must not so cleave to 'Holy Mother' Church as [that] we neglect our Heavenly Father and his Commandments: which, we know, in that estate, we could not but transgress; and that heinously, and against our consciences; not only in the want of many Christian Ordinances, to which we were most straitly bound, both by God's Word and our own necessities; but also in our most sinful subjection to Antichristian Enormities, which we are bound to eschew as Hell. She is our 'Mother;' so may she be, and yet not the Lord's Wife! Every mother of children is not a wife. 'Ammi and Ruhamah' were bidden to 'plead' with their 'mother,' apostate Israel; and 'plead' that she was 'not' the Lord's 'wife,' nor he her 'husband.'\* And though you forbid us a thousand times, yet must we 'plead.' Not to 'excuse' our 'fault,' but to justify our innocency: and that not only, nor so much, in respect of ourselves, as of the Truth which,

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\* Hos. ii. 1, 2.

without sacrilege, we may not suffer to be condemned unheard. And if you yet hear her not, rather blame yourselves as deaf than as dumb. Is not 'Babylon' the Mother of God's 'people;' whom He, therefore, commandeth to 'depart out of her,' lest, being 'partakers of her sins,' they also partake of her 'plagues?'"\* And, to conclude, What say you more against us, for your 'Mother,' the Church of England; than the Papists do for their Mother, and your Mother's Mother, the Church of Rome, against you whom they condemn as unnatural bastards, and impious matricides, in your separations from her? And were not Luther, Zuinglius, Cranmer, Latimer, and the rest, begot to the Lord in the womb of the Romish Church? Did they not receive the knowledge of his truth when they stood actual members of it? Whom, notwithstanding, afterwards, they forsook; and that justly, for her fornications! But here, in the name of the Church of England, you wash your hands of all Babylonish abominations; which you pretend you have forsaken, and her, for and with them. And, in this regard, you, [we] speak thus, 'The Reformation you have made of the many and main corruptions of the Romish Church we do ingenuously acknowledge, and do, withal, embrace with you, all the truths which, to our knowledge, you have received instead of them; but Rome was not built all in a day.'

"The 'mystery of iniquity' did advance itself by degrees; and as the rise was, so must the fall be. That 'man of sin,' and lawless man, must languish and die away of a consumption.† And what though many of the highest towers of Babel, and of the strongest pillars also, be demolished and pulled down; yet may the building stand still, though tottering to and fro, as it doth, and only underproped with the shoulder and arm of flesh; without which, in a very moment, it would fall flat upon and be level with the earth. You have renounced many false doctrines in Popery, and, in their places, embraced the truth. But what, if this truth be taught under the same hateful Prelacy; in the same devised office of ministry; and confused communion of the profane multitude; and that mingled with many grievous errors? Shall some general truths—yea,

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\* Rev. xviii. 2, 4.

† 2 Thes. ii. 8.

though few of them, in the particulars, may be soundly practised—sweeten and sanctify the other errors? Doth not one heresy make a heretic? And doth not a ‘little leaven,’ whether in doctrine or manners, ‘leaven the whole lump?’\* If antichrist held not many truths, wherewith should he countenance so many forgeries? Or, how could his work be a ‘mystery of iniquity;’ which, in Rome is more gross and palpable, but in England is spun with a finer thread, and so more hardly discovered? But to wade no further in universalities, we will take a little time to examine such particulars as you yourself have picked out for your most advantage, to see whether you be so clear of Babel’s towers in your own evidence, as you bear the world in hand.

“‘Where,’ say you, ‘are those proud towers of their universal Hierarchy?’ One in Lambeth; another in Fulham; and wheresoever a pontifical Prelate is, or his Chancellor, Commissary, or other subordinate, there is a tower of Babel unruinated! To this end I desire to know of you, whether the office of Archbishops, Bishops, and the rest of that rank, were not parts of that accursed Hierarchy, in Queen Mary’s days; and members of that ‘man of sin?’ If they were, then as shoulders and arms under that head, the Pope; and over the inferior members; and have now, the same Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction derived and continued upon them, whereof they were possessed in the time of Popery—as it is plain they have, by the first Parliament of Queen Elizabeth—Why are they not still members of that body, though the head, the Pope, be cut off? And so do all the Reformed Churches in the world—of whose testimony you boast so loud—renounce the Prelacy of England, as part of that Pseudo-Clergy and Antichristian Hierarchy derived from Rome.

“Infallibility of Judgment: It seems the Sacred, so called, Synod, assumeth little less unto herself in her determinations. Otherwise, how durst she decree so absolutely, as she doth, touching things reputed ‘indifferent;’ namely, ‘That all men, in all places, must submit unto them, with-

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\* 1 Cor. v. 6. Gal. v. 9. Hag. ii. 13.

out exception or limitation? Except she could infallibly determine that these her Ceremonies, thus absolutely imposed, should edify all men at all times, how durst she thus impose them? To exact obedience in and unto them, whether they offend or offend not; whether they edify or destroy; were intolerable presumption.

“Dispensations with the Laws of God, and Sins of Men: To let pass your Ecclesiastical Consistories, wherein sins, and absolutions from them, are as venal and saleable as at Rome,—is it not a Law of the Eternal God, that the Ministers of the Gospel, the bishops or elders, should be ‘apt’ and ‘able’ to ‘teach?’\* And, is it not their grievous sin to be unapt hereunto?† And yet, who knoweth not that the Patrons amongst you present, that the Bishops institute, the Archdeacon’s induct, the Churches receive; and the Laws, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, allow and justify Ministers unapt and unable to ‘teach?’

“Insufficiency and non-residency of Ministers, etc.: Is it not a Law of the Eternal God, that the ‘Elders’ should ‘feed the flock,’ over which they are set, labouring amongst them in the Word and doctrine?‡ And is it not sin to omit this duty? Plead not for Baal. Your dispensations for non-residency and Pluralities of Benefices, as for two, three, or more; yea, *tot quot*, as many as a man will have, or can get, are so many dispensations of the Laws of God and sins of men. These things are too impious to be defended, and too manifest to be denied.

“Disposition of Kingdoms, and desposition of Princes: You are wiser, and I hope honester than thus to attempt, though that received maxim amongst you, ‘No ceremony, no bishop; no bishop, no king;’ savours too strongly of that weed. But what though you be loyal to earthly kings, and their crowns and kingdoms, yet if you be traitors and rebels against the King of his Church, Jesus Christ, and the sceptre of his Kingdom, not suffering Him, by his Laws and Officers, to reign over you; but, instead of them, do stoop to Antichrist in his offices and ordinances; shall your loyalty towards men excuse your treason against the Lord!

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\* 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i. 9.

† Isai. lvi. 10, 11.

‡ Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

Though you now cry never so loud, ‘ We have no king but Caesar,’\* yet is there ‘ another king, one Jesus,’† which shall return and pass a heavy doom upon the rebellious— ‘ These mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them, and slay them before me‡.

“ Parting stakes with God in Conversion : Not to speak of the error of universal grace, and consequently of free-will, that groweth on apace amongst you ; what do you else but put in for a part with God in Conversion, though not through freedom of will, yet in a devised Ministry, the means of Conversion. It being the Lord’s peculiar as well to appoint the outward ministry of conversion, as to give the inward grace.§

“ Kneeling at the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper : ‘ Where,’ say you, ‘ are those rotten heaps of Transubstantiating of Bread ? And where, say I, learned you your devout kneeling to or before the Bread, but, from that error of Transubstantiation ? Yea, what less can it insinuate than either that or some other the like idolatrous conceit ! If there were not something more in the bread and wine than in the water at baptism, or in the Word read or preached, why should such solemn kneeling be so severely pressed at that time, rather than upon the other occasions ? And well and truly have your own men affirmed, that it were far less sin and appearance of an idolatry that is nothing so gross, to tie men, in their prayers, to kneel before a crucifix, than before the bread and wine : and the reason followeth, for that Papists commit an idolatry far more gross and odious in worshipping the bread, than in worshipping any other of their images or idols whatsoever.

“ Adoring of Images : To let pass your devout kneeling unto your Ordinary, when you take the oath of canonical obedience, or receive absolution at his hands, which, as the main actions are religious, must needs be religious adoration ! what is the adoring of your truly human, though called ‘ Divine,’ Service Book, in and by which you worship God, as the Papists do by their images ? If the Lord Jesus, in his Testament, have not commanded any such Book, it is accursed and abominable. If you think he have,

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\* John xix. 15. † Acts xvii. 7. ‡ Luke xix. 27. § 1 Cor. iii. 9.

show us the place where ; that we may know it with you : or manifest unto us, that ever the Apostles used themselves, or commended to the churches after them, any such Service Book ! Was not the Lord, in the Apostles' time, and Apostolic Churches', purely and perfectly worshipped, when the officers of the Church, in their ministration, manifested the spirit of prayer which they had received according to the present necessities and occasions of the Church ; before the least parcel of this Patchery came into the world ? And might not the Lord now be also purely and perfectly worshipped, though this Printed Image, with the painted and carved images, were sent back to Rome ; yea, or cast to hell, from whence both they and it came ? Speak, in yourself, might not the Lord be entirely worshipped with pure and holy worship, though none other Book but the Holy Scriptures were brought into the Church : if yea,—as who can deny it, that knows what the worship of God meaneth,—what, then, doth your Service Book there ? The Word of God is perfect, and admitteth of none addition. Cursed be he that addeth to the Word of the Lord ; and cursed be that which is added ; and so be your great Idol, the Communion Book, though, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, some part of the matter be gold and silver, which is also so much the more detestable by how much it is the more highly advanced amongst you.

“ Multitudes of Sacraments : The number of Sacraments seems greater amongst you, by one at least, than Christ hath left in his Testament ; and that is Marriage, which, howsoever, you do not, in express terms, call a sacrament,—no more did Christ and the Apostles call Baptism and the Supper ‘ sacraments,’—yet do you, in truth, create it a sacrament, in the administration and use of it. There are the parties to be married, and their marriage, representing ‘ Christ and his Church,’ and their ‘ spiritual’ union ; to which ‘ mystery,’ saith the oracle of your Service Book expressly, God hath ‘ consecrated’ them. There is the Ring, hallowed by the said Service Book, whereon it must be laid, for the element ; there are the words of consecration, ‘ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;’ there is the place, the Church ; the time, usually the Lord's day ; the minister, the Parish priest.

And being made, as it is, a part of God's worship, and of the minister's office, what is it, if it be not a sacrament ? It is no part of prayer, or preaching ; and with the sacrament it hath the greatest consimilitude ; but an Idol I am sure it is, in the celebration of it ; being made a ministerial duty, and part of God's worship, without warrant, call it by what name you will.

“ Power of Indulgences : Your Court of Faculties, from whence your dispensations and tolerations for Nonresidency, and plurality of Benefices, are had ; together with your commuting of Penances, and absolving one man from another : take away this power from the Prelates, and you maim the ‘ Beast ’ in a limb.

“ Necessity of Confessions : In your High Commission Court very absolute ; where, by the oath *Ex Officio*, men are constrained to accuse themselves of such things as whereof no man will or can accuse them ; what necessity is laid upon them in this case, let your prisons witness.

“ Profit of Pilgrimages : Though you have lost the Shrines of Saints, yet you retain their days, and those holy as the Lord's day ; and that with good profit to your spiritual, carnal Courts, from such as profane them with the least and most lawful labour, notwithstanding the liberty of the six days' labour which the Lord hath given. And as much would the Masters of these Courts be stirred at the casting of these saints' days out of the Calendar, as were the ‘ masters ’ of the possessed maid, when ‘ the spirit of divination ’ was cast out of her : Acts xvi. 19.

“ Constrained and approved Ignorance : If an ignorant and unpreaching Ministry be approved amongst you, and the People constrained, by all kinds of violence, to submit unto it, and therewith to rest,—as what is more usual throughout the whole kingdom,—then let no modest man once open his mouth to deny that ‘ ignorance ’ is ‘ constrained and approved ’ amongst you.

“ Unknown Devotions : If the Service, said or sung, in the Parish Church, may be called ‘ devotion,’ then sure there is good store of unknown devotion ; the greatest part, in most Parishes, neither knowing nor regarding what is said, nor wherefore.

“ Penances Enjoined : What are your Sheet Penances

for adultery, and all your Purse Penances for all other sins? Than which, though some worse in Popery, yet none more common.

“Touching Purgatory: Though you deny the doctrine of it, and teach the contrary, yet how well your practice suits with it, let it be considered in these particulars: Your absolving of men dying excommunicate, after they be dead, and before they may have Christian-burial: your Christian-burial in holy ground, if the party will be at the charges: your ringing of hallowed bells for the soul: your singing the corpse to the grave from the Church stile: your praying over, or for the dead; especially in these words, ‘That God would hasten his kingdom, that we with this our brother,’ though his life were never so wretched and death desperate, ‘and all other departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation both in body and soul.’ Your general doctrines, and your particular practices, agree in this, as in the most other things, like ‘harp and harrow!’ In word you profess many truths, which in deed you deny. These and many more Popish devices,—by others, at large, discovered to the world,—both for pomp and profit, are not only not rased, and buried in the dust, but are advanced amongst you, above all that is called God.

“The Churches still retained, in England: You are far from doing to the Romish idols as was done to the Egyptian idols ‘Mithra and Serapis,’ whose priests were expelled their ministry, and monuments exposed to utter scorn and desolation; their temples demolished and rased to the very foundation.

“The Founders, and Furnitures of your Churches: But your Temples, especially your Cathedrals and Mother-Churches, stand, still, in their proud majesty, possessed by Archbishops and Lord Bishops, like the Flamens and Arch-flamens amongst the Gentiles, from whom they were derived and furnished with all manner of pompous and superstitious monuments; as carved and painted images, massing copes and surplices; chanting and organ music, and many other glorious ornaments of the Romish Harlot, by which her majesty is commended to and admired by the vulgar; so far are you in these respects, from being



gone, or fled, yea, or crept either, out of Babylon ! Now, if you be thus Babylonish where you repute yourselves most Sion-like, and thus confounded in your own evidence ; what defence could you make in the things whereof an adversary would challenge you ? If your light be darkness, how great is your darkness !

“ On what ground Separation, or Ceremonies, was objected : But for that, not the Separation, but the cause, makes the Schismatic ; and lest you should seem to speak evil of the thing you know not, and to condemn a cause unheard, you lay down, in the next place, the supposed cause of our Separation ; against which, you deal as insufficiently : and that you pretend to be, none other than your ‘ consorting ’ with the Papists in certain ‘ Ceremonies ; ’ touching which, and our Separation in regard of them, thus you write. Master Hall ; If you have taken but the least knowledge of the grounds of our judgment and practice, how dare you thus abuse both us and the reader, as if the only or chief ground of our Separation were your Popish Ceremonies ? But if you go only by guess, having never so much as read over our treatise published in our defence, and yet stick not to pass this your censorious doom both upon us and it ; I leave it to the reader to judge whether you have been more lavish of your censure or credit ! Most unjust is the censure of a cause unknown ; though in itself never so blameworthy ; which, nevertheless, may be praiseworthy for aught he knows that censures it.

“ Estimation of Ceremonies, and Subjection to the prelates : And touching the ‘ Ceremonies ’ here spoken of, howsoever we have formerly refused them, submitting, as all others did and do, to the Prelate’s Spiritual Jurisdiction—herein, through ignorance, straining at ‘ gnats,’ and swallowing ‘ camels,’—yet, are we verily persuaded of them, and so were before we separated, That they are but as leaves of that tree, and as badges of that ‘ man of sin,’ whereof the Pope is head, and the Prelates’ shoulders ! And so we, for our parts, see no reason why any of the Bishops’ sworn servants, as all the Ministers, of the Church of England are canonically, should make nice to wear their Lords’ liveries. Which ‘ Ceremonies,’ notwithstanding, we know well enough, howsoever you, for advantage,

extenuate and debase them unto us,—to be advanced and preferred, in your Church, before the Preaching of the Gospel. It is much that they, being ‘not so much as reed,’ nor any part of the building,—as you pretend,—should overturn the best builders amongst you as they do. The proportion betwixt ‘Zoar’ and them, holds well : Zoar was a neighbour unto Sodom both in place and sin, and obnoxious to the same destruction with it ; and it was Lot’s error to desire to have it spared,\* and so he never found rest nor peace in it, but forsook it for fear of the same just judgment which had overtaken the rest of the cities. The application of this to your ‘Ceremonies,’ I leave to yourself ; and them, to that destruction to which they are devoted by the Lord.

“The state of the Temple, and the Church of England in resemblance : How we would have behaved ourselves ‘in the Temple,’ where ‘the money-changers’ were, and they that ‘sold doves,’ we shall answer you when you prove your Church to be the ‘Temple of God,’ compiled and built of spiritually ‘hewn’ and ‘lively stones ;’† and of the ‘cedars, firs,’‡ and ‘thyme,’§ trees of Lebanon, framed and set together in that comely order which ‘a greater than Solomon’ hath prescribed ; unto which God hath promised his presence. But whilst we take it to be, as it is, a confused heap of dead and defiled, and polluted stones, and of all rubbish of briars and brambles of the wilderness, for the most part, fitter for burning than building ; we take ourselves rather bound to show our obedience in departing from it, than our valour in purging it ; and to follow the Prophet’s counsel in flying out of Babylon, ‘as the he-goats before the flock.’

“Whether Ministers should endure themselves Silenced : And what, I pray you, is the valour which the best hearted and most zealous Reformers amongst you, have manifested in driving out ‘the money-changers ?’ Doth it not appear in this, that they suffer themselves to be driven out with the two-stringed whip of Ceremonies and Subscription, by ‘the money-changers’ the Chancellors and Officials which

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\* Gen. 19: 15, 18, 19, 20. † 1 Kings 5: 17, 18. 6: 7. 1 Pet. 2: 5.

‡ 2 Chron. 2: 8.

§ Rev. 18: 12.

sell sins like ‘doves;’ and by the chief-priests, the Bishops, which set them on work? So far are the most zealous amongst you, from driving out the ‘money-changers,’ as [that] they themselves are driven out by them; because they will not change with them to the utmost farthing!

“Power of Reforming Abuses: For the ‘wafers,’ in Geneva; and disorders, in Corinth; they were Corruptions which may and do, or the like unto them, creep into the purest Churches in the world: for the Reformation whereof, Christ hath given his power unto his Church, that such evils as are brought in by human frailty may, by divine authority, be purged out. This power and presence of Christ, you want; holding all by homage, or rather by villanage, under the Prelates; unto whose sinful yoke you stoop, in more than Babylonish bondage, bearing, and approving, by personal communion, infinite abominations. And in these last two respects principally; your Babylonish confusion of all sorts of people in the body of your Church, without separation: and your Babylonish bondage under your spiritual Lords, the Prelates; we account you Babylon, and fly from you.

“The view of the Sins and Disorders of others, whereupon objected: Master Hall having formerly expostulated with us our supposed Impiety, in forsaking a ‘Ceremonious’ Babylon in England, proceeds, in the next place, to lay down our Madness, in choosing a ‘substantial’ Babylon in ‘Amsterdam.’ And if it be so found, by due trial, as he suggesteth, it is hard to say, whether our Impiety or Madness be the greater! Belike Master Hall thinks we gather Churches here, by town-rows, as they do in England; and that all within the Parish Procession are of the same Church. Wherefore else, tells he us of Jews, Arians, and Anabaptists; with whom we have nothing common but the streets and market-place? It is the condition of the Church, to live in the world, and to have civil society with the men of the world.\* But what is this, to that spiritual communion of the saints in the fellowship of the Gospel, wherein they are separated, and sanctified, from the world unto the Lord?†

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\* 1 Cor. 5: 10. John 17: 13.

† John 17: 16. 1 Cor. 1: 2. 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18.

“The nearness of the State and Church : We, indeed, have much wickedness in the City where we live ; you in the Church : but in earnest, do you imagine we account the Kingdom of England ‘Babylon,’ or the city of Amsterdam ‘Sion?’ It is the Church of England, or State-Ecclesiastical, which we account Babylon ; and from which we withdraw in spiritual communion. But for the Commonwealth or Kingdom, as we honour it above all the States in the world, so would we thankfully embrace the meanest corner in it, at the extremest conditions of any people in the kingdom. The hellish impieties in the city of ‘Amsterdam’ do no more prejudice our heavenly communion in the Church of Christ, than the frogs, lice, flies, murrain, and other plagues overspreading Egypt, did the Israelites, when Goshen, the portion of their inheritance, was free ;\* nor than the deluge, wherewith the whole world was covered, did Noah, when he and his family were safe in the ark ;† nor than ‘Satan’s throne’ did the Church of Pergamos, being established in the same city with it.‡

“Conversation with the World : It is the will of God and of Christ, that his Church should abide in the World, and converse with it in the affairs thereof, which are common to both. But it is the apostacy of Antichrist to have communion with the world in the holy things of God, which are the peculiars of the Church, and cannot, without great sacrilege, be so prostituted and profaned.

“The Impure Mixtures of the Church of England : The air of the Gospel which you draw in, is nothing so free and clear as you make show. It is only because you are used to it, that makes you so judge. The thick smoke of your *Canons*, especially of such as are planted against the Kingdom of Christ, the visible church and the administration of it, do both obscure and poison the air which you all draw in, and wherein you breathe. The plaguy spiritual leprosy of sin rising up in the foreheads of so many thousands in the Church, unshut up, uncovered, infects all, both persons and things, amongst you.§ The blasting Hierarchy suffers no good thing to grow or prosper, but withers all, both bud and branch. The daily sacrifice of the Service Book,

\* Exod. 8: 22.

† Gen. 7.

‡ Rev. 2: 13.

§ Lev. 13: 45—47. 2 Cor. 6: 17.

which,—instead of spiritual prayer sweet as incense,—you offer up, morning and evening, smells so strong of the Pope's *portuis*, as it makes many hundreds, amongst yourselves, stop their noses at it ; and yet you boast of ' the free and clear air of the Gospel ' wherein you breathe !

" The Judgment of the Church of England by Herself and her Neighbours : That ' all Christendom should so magnify ' your ' happiness,' as you say, is much ; and yet yourselves, and the best amongst you, complain so much, both in word and writing, of your miserable condition under the imperious and superstitious Impositions of the Prelates ; yea, and suffer so much also, under them, as at this day you do, for seeking the same Church Government and Ministry which is in use in all other churches, save your own ! The truth is, you are best liked where you are worst known. Your next neighbours of Scotland know your Bishops' Government so well as they rather choose to undergo all the misery of bonds and banishment, than to partake with you in your ' happiness ' this way : so highly do they ' magnify ' and ' applaud ' the same ! Which choice, I doubt not, other Churches also, would make, if the same Necessity were laid upon them ! And for your ' graces,' we ' despise ' them not, nor any good thing amongst you ; no more than you do such graces and good things as are to be found in the Church of Rome, from which you separate notwithstanding. We have, by God's mercy, the pure and right use of the good gifts and graces of God in Christ's Ordinance, which you want. Neither the Lord's people, nor the holy vessels, could make Babylon Sion ; though both the one and the other were captived for a time.

" The Issue of Separation : Where the truth is a gainer, the Lord,—which is TRUTH,—cannot be ' a loser.' Neither is ' the thanks ' of ancient ' favours lost,' amongst them which still press on towards new mercies. Unthankful are they unto the blessed Majesty of God, and unfaithful also, which, knowing the will of their Master, do it *not*, but go on presumptuously, in disobedience to many—the holy ordinances of the Lord and of his Christ—which they know, and in word also acknowledge, he hath given to his Church to be observed ; and not for idle speculation, and disputation, without obedience. It is not by our ' sequestration,' but by your confusion, that ' Rome and Hell gains.' Your

odious commixture of all sorts of people in the body of your Church, in whose lap the vilest miscreants are dandled; sucking her breasts, as her natural children; and are be-blest by her—as having right thereunto—with all her holy things, as prayer, sacraments, and other ceremonies; is that which advantageth ‘Hell,’ in the final obduration and perdition of the wicked, whom, by these means, you flatter and deceive. The Romish Prelacy and Priesthood amongst you, with the appurtenances for their maintenance and ministrations, are Rome’s advantage: which, therefore, she challengeth as her own; and by which, she also still holds possession amongst you, under the hope of regaining her full inheritance, at one time or other. And, if the Papists take ‘advantage’ at our condemnation of you, and separation from you; it concerns you, well to see where the blame is, and there to lay it; lest, through light and inconsiderate judgment, you justify the wicked, and condemn the righteous. And, for the suspicion of the ‘rude multitude,’ you need not much fear it. They will suspect nothing that comes under the King’s Broad Seal; they are ignorant of this fault! Though it were the Mass that came with authority of the Magistrate, they, for the most part, would be without suspicion of it; so ignorant and profane are they in the most places. It is the wise-hearted, amongst you, that suspect your dealings; who will also suspect you yet more, as your unsound dealings shall be further discovered.

“The conclusion: Lastly; The terrible threat you utter against us, ‘That even whoredoms and murders shall abide an easier answer, than Separation,’ would certainly fall heavy upon us, if this answer were to be made in your Consistory Courts, or before any of your Ecclesiastical Judges; but because we know that not Antichrist, but Christ, shall be our Judge, we are bold upon the Warrant of His Word and Testament—which being sealed with His blood, may not be altered—to proclaim to all the world, Separation from whatsoever riseth up rebelliously against the sceptre of His Kingdom; as we are undoubtedly persuaded the Communion, Government, Ministry, and Worship of the Church of England do!”









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